Bomb expert, 22 others hurt in Kidapawan blast

Story IN ACROSS THE NATION, Page A14

RP won't ask US, EU to recall terrorist tag

By Carlito Pablo, Norman Bordadora and Armand N. Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT will not ask the United States and members of the European Union (EU) to recall their classification of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, as foreign terrorist orga-

RP WON'T/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Nani not out, still in Gloria's Cabinet

WHO says the man is down and out?

Hernando Perez, who quit as justice secretary last month while under accusation of extortion, apparently remains a member of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet.

NANI/ A6

BUHAY PA AKO!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, January 29, 2003 ★★ 52 pages / 4 sections / vol. 18 / no. 52 P15
website: www.inq7.net

Bush readies US for war

NORTHERN Kuwait where US troops are massing and training for a possible strike on neighbor Iraq can be "a battlefield," says a top Iraqi official who vows his country will retaliate wherever aggression starts. GETTY IMAGES

UN inspectors yet to find major evidence

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush will use his State of the Union speech on Tuesday night (Wednesday morning in Manila) to prepare anxious Americans for a possible war with Iraq, but will withhold an announcement of an attack amid growing antiwar sentiment at home and abroad.

Bush's most important speech of the new year comes a day after UN weapons inspectors bolstered the US case that Iraq had failed to cooperate with them wholeheartedly, although they asked for a few more months to complete their task.

Their presentations before the UN Security Council on Monday, 60 days after inspections resumed following a four-year break, left the five veto-wielding council members divided on how much more time should Baghdad be given to disarm.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz promised more cooperation in the future, but he also warned that any US invasion force would be met with "bullets, not flowers."

Even so, the Pentagon pushed ahead with war preparations involving the deployment of more than 150,000 troops and four aircraft carrier battle groups, each with more than 70 warplanes, in the Persian Gulf by the end of February.

Bush will appear in the House of Representa-

BUSH/ A18

Asean officials to hold 'extraordinary meeting'

SOUTHEAST Asian foreign ministers will hold an "extraordinary meeting" to discuss courses of action in case the United States launches an attack on Iraq.

"We will meet to discuss what actions Asean can take in case of a war in Iraq," Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said in a statement issued from Brussels.

"All of us do not want to see a war in Iraq, but we agreed that we should meet and discuss our options in case of such a development," he said.

The diplomatic initiative came on the same day that anti-war op-

ASEAN/ A18

US ready to target communist guerrillas

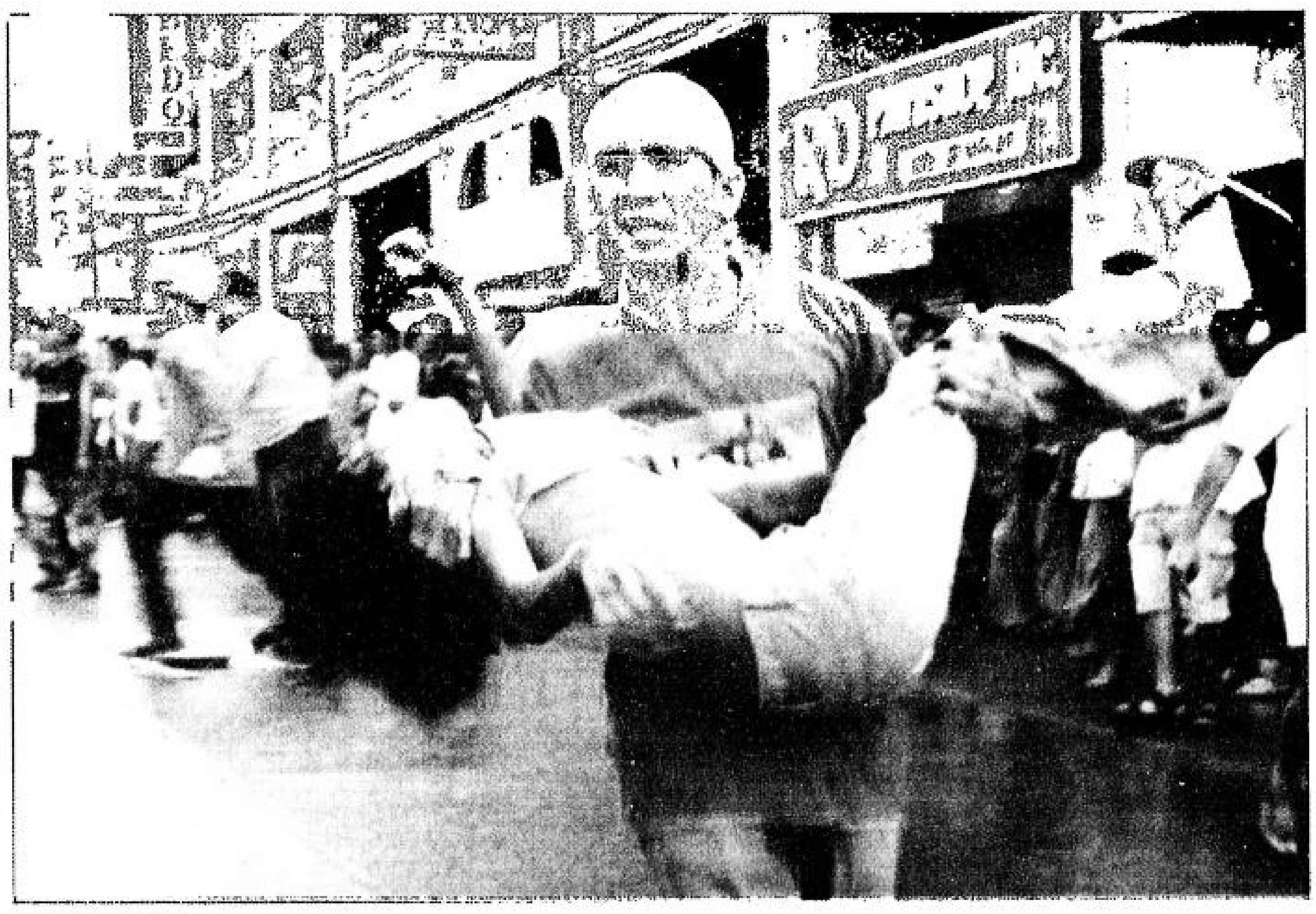
AN AMERICAN commander said yesterday it would be up to the Philippine government to decide where to deploy US forces and which rebel group to target.

Last week, Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Narciso Abaya said more than 2,000 troops battling the Abu Sayyaf may soon be redeployed to fight communist rebels who have recently stepped up attacks.

The deployment last year of about 1,200 US troops in Mindanao has been credited with helping the Armed Forces of the Philippines decimate a faction of the Abu Sayyaf, blamed for kidnappings and killings, including the deaths of two American hostages.

Col. Douglas Lengenfelder, US commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines, also said that counterterrorism operations here would not be affected by a possible US military strike on Iraq.

US READY/ A17



EMERGENCY
A volunteer rushes a bombing victim to a hospital following an explosion on Tuesday in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato, which had injured 23 people as of press time. The bombing also sparked a fire in a three-story commercial building. *(Story on Page A14.)* AP

Squabbles delay vote on Tancangco impeachment

By Juliet L. Javellana and Christine O. Avendaño

CIVIC leader Bea Zobel was heard to mutter, "It's disgusting," an hour after the House began to hear the impeachment complaint against Election Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco.

In the end, House leaders decided to defer to today the vote on the impeachment complaint against Tancangco, after they allowed floor deliberations on the complaint to continue well into last night.

Assistant Majority Leader Francis Escudero said the vote on the impeachment complaint would take place after today's roll call of members.

Floor deliberations on the House committee on justice's report on the Tancangco case took more than three hours last night, with lawmakers standing up

SQUABBLES/ A17

Ex-NPA chief Kintanar to have Christian funeral

JOAN BONDOC

ROUGH time for Joy and son Gabriel as their loved one is cremated today.

By Alcuin Papa

THE MAN who was a communist revolutionary for more than 20 years will have a Catholic funeral.

The remains of the 50-year-old Kintanar are scheduled for cremation at 9 a.m. today after the Mass at 8 at Funeraria Paz in Quezon City.

According to his family, his ashes will be brought to the family residence where they will remain for nine days.

Members of Kintanar's family and friends led by Fr. Robert Reyes yesterday held a "Run for Peace and Justice" in his honor.

Around 20 runners, including Kintanar's widow Ma. Gloria "Joy" Asuncion, his son Gabriel and stepchildren Nonoy, Joyet and Riza, started off from the Bahay ng Alumni at the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman and finished at the Kamameshi Restaurant at the Quezon Memorial Circle where he was gunned down by still unidentified assailants.

It was also at the Bahay ng Alumni that gunmen shot dead another former CPP leader, Filemon "Popoy" Lagman, two years ago. The case remains unsolved.

At the close of the "Run for Peace and

EX-NPA/ A6

PNP offers ₱1-M bounty for Ka Roger

By TJ Burgonio

THE PHILIPPINE National Police has revived the reward system against top leaders of the New People's Army and is offering a P1-million reward for the capture of its spokesperson, Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal.

"He has the highest prize on his head among the NPA leaders," Chief Supt. Robert Delfin, PNP director for intelligence, said in reference to Rosal, who had again taken a high profile after months of being laid low by an illness.

Delfin said that years ago, the Department of Interior and Local Government put up P90,000 for Rosal's head. He said the PNP had yet to discuss the corresponding rewards for the capture of members of the Communist Party of the Philippines' Central Committee and Political Bureau.

Rosal announced Sunday that the NPA

PNP OFFERS/ A6

No overdose of spirituality in cancer cases

By Tessa R. Salazar

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

IF SPIRITUALITY could be given in "doses," how much would cancer specialists prescribe to their patients?

a) No fixed dosage
b) As freely as the patient desires
c) Full dose at the start, then maintenance at regular intervals
d) Maximum allowable dosage
e) All of the above.

The answer is "e."

Filipino oncologists maintain an open mind on the benefits that spirituality

NO OVERDOSE/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern and Eastern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/29/03

Second FRONT PAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

GMA warns of new power crisis

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo warned yesterday that the country was headed for a major power crisis similar to the one it suffered a decade ago unless it acts quickly to avert it, adding that massive foreign capital and technology would be needed to solve the problem.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 500-megawatt San Lorenzo power plant in Sta. Rita, Batangas, yesterday, the President said the Philippines did not have enough power-generating plants to meet expected demand.

"If we don't act now, and fast, we will have serious power shortages in the Visayas from 2004 to 2005, in Mindanao by 2005 and in Luzon by 2008," she said.

The country suffered debilitating power outages in the early 1990s, bringing most industries to a standstill.

"People think that we have an oversupply of power, but this is only true today for the main grid of Luzon," the President said.

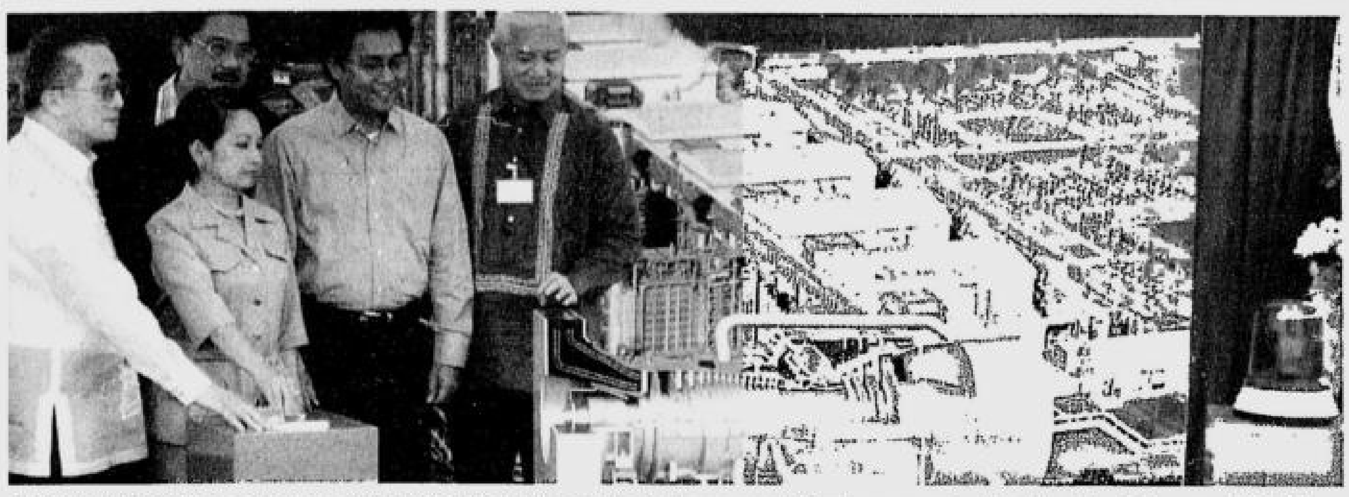
To avoid the shortages, she said the country must develop an additional 6,000MW of generating capacity in the next 10 years—4,500MW in Luzon, 1,000MW in the Visayas and 700MW in Mindanao. She was citing studies of the Asian Development Bank and financial and technical advisers on the the government's power privatization program.

At least P400 billion in investments would be needed over the next 10 years to boost power generating capacity and related infrastructure, she said.

"Because of the staggering numbers involved, foreign capital and technology are key to privatization," she said.

The President stressed that setting up new power plants would be left strictly to the private sector as the government can no longer afford to prop up the state-owned National Power Corp. with P38 billion in subsidies annually.

Since at least three years were needed to set up a power plant, Napocor was already behind schedule in the Visayas, Ms Macapagal said.



PRESIDENT Macapagal presses the button to switch on the 500-megawatt San Lorenzo plant in Sta. Rita, Batangas. Watching are First Gas Power chairman Oscar Lopez, former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez and Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas.

MEI MAGSINO/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

She said Panay was already experiencing power shortages, since its demand for 190MW of electricity was bigger than the available dependable capacity of 138MW.

A power barge would be delivered on Saturday to Panay as a temporary measure to augment its power needs, Ms Macapagal said.

On Monday, the government called for bids for Napocor's transmission assets as part of its efforts to privatize the power sector, lower power charges and free itself of the burden of paying annual subsidies to Napocor.

But analysts have said that the success of Napocor's privatization hinges on approval by the Senate of the franchise bill of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), a company formed to hold the transmission assets of Napocor.

The House of Representatives has already approved the Transco franchise bill.

The President yesterday called again on the Senate to pass the franchise bill, saying Transco's privatization would pave the way for the sale of Napocor's generating assets.

She said the Visayas was the "most vulnerable and most affected by the delay in Transco's privatization."

"I shall not inordinately toss blame, but I want to spare the senators now blocking its passage from having to explain to the Visayans why they will soon face a shortage of electricity," she said.

The $500-million San Lorenzo power plant was undertaken by First Gas Holdings Corp., a joint venture between the Lopez Group's First Philippine Holdings Corp. and BG plc.

The 500MW plant, which will complement the 1,000MW Sta. Rita power plant, will use fuel from the newly developed Malampaya natural gas field in Palawan.

Ms Macapagal said that apart from the impact of the project, she had another reason for going to the inauguration of the plant.

"I want the world to know that Meralco and the government are not fighting each other," she declared, drawing laughter and applause.

The Lopezes accused the government last year of attempting a takeover of Meralco after the Supreme Court ordered the power distributing firm to refund its consumers some P1.2 billion in overcharges to its customers.

The government has denied the charge, claiming that it was only trying to establish a presence in the company's management to reassure Meralco's many creditors that the power utility, which is 21-percent state-owned, would not be allowed to go under from the weight of the huge refunds it would have to pay.

Dona Pazzibugan and Reuters

$2-M BRIBERY PROBE

Senate to call Perez, pals

THE SENATE will summon the associates of former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez who allegedly helped him hide a purported $2-million bribe he supposedly received to give a favorable opinion on the Impsa power deal.

To be subpoenaed are businessman Ernest Escaler and Ramon Arceo, Perez's brother-in-law who allegedly maintained the dollar account at Coutts Bank in Hong Kong to which the bribe was supposedly wired.

Sen. John Osmeña, chair of the Senate committee on government corporations and public enterprises, said he was still waiting for the official reply of an independent Hong Kong graft commission that had looked into the Coutts Bank account.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson had claimed the $2 million was part of a $14-million bribe supposedly offered to former President Joseph Estrada to approve the Impsa deal. The contract called for the Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima, an Argentine firm, to build, rehabilitate, operate and transfer to the government the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan power plant in Laguna.

Lacson said Estrada did not sign the contract because of its sovereign guarantee provision, which committed the government to cover any losses of Impsa.

The ongoing Senate hearings on the issue, however, established that the deal was signed by Estrada's finance secretary, Jose Pardo, with no less than the former President signing as a witness.

Legal opinion

At the Senate hearing, lawyers from the Department of Justice told the senators how the legal opinion rendered by Perez was prepared.

Assistant chief state counsel Rosalinda Vicente said officials of the National Power Corp. came to the DOJ legal division several times to follow up on Perez's legal opinion on the contract.

Sen. Joker Arroyo had maintained the legal opinion of a justice secretary was not sufficient to change the stand of a President on the issue.

Cynthia D. Balana

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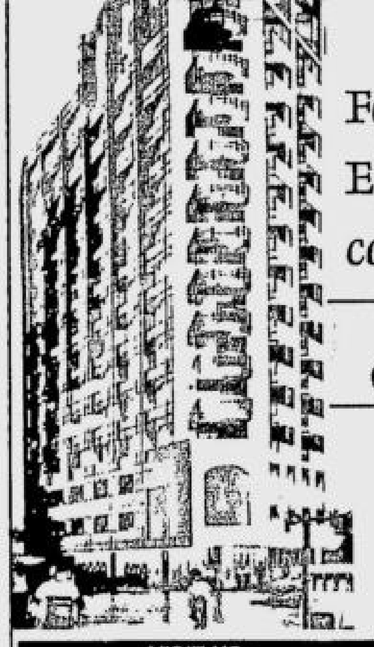

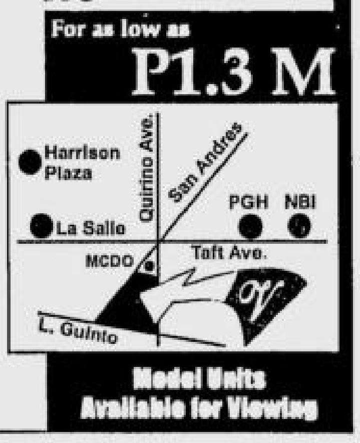

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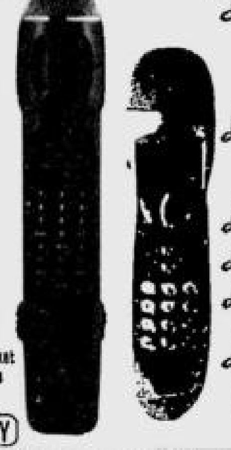

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Let's focus on more urgent things, not Cha-cha–Pangilinan

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE PATH to Charter change (Cha-cha) is a long one thus government should focus first on more urgent matters that are practical and doable, like the modernization of the judiciary.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan made the statement yesterday as he urged members of Congress to concentrate on more pressing pending bills such as the one that would increase the salaries of judges and court personnel.

Pangilinan said Charter change initiatives should be put aside following President Macapagal-Arroyo's renewed call to modernize the country's judicial system.

"Another way of institutionalizing a new system of effective governance is by implementing radical reforms within the various social institutions," he said. "This time let us give our judicial system a much needed break."

Pangilinan noted that the government has initiated modernization programs for the agriculture and military sectors as part of efforts to strengthen the socio-economic structure of the country.

"We need to put in place mechanisms to ensure that the rule of law and our Constitution are upheld at all times," he said. "To build a strong republic, we need a strong judiciary."

Pangilinan said no less than the President has recognized the need to overhaul the judiciary to achieve social equity and give the economy a big push.

He said proposals to amend the Constitution had become trite and parochial in some ways to the point of turning into political baggage for those espousing it.

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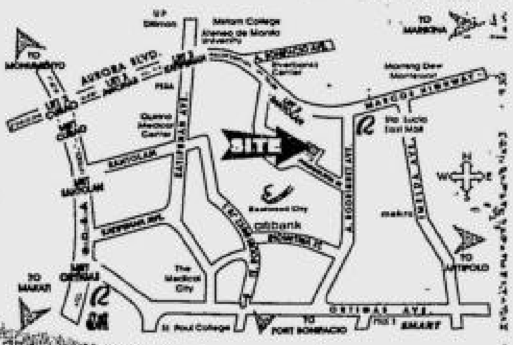
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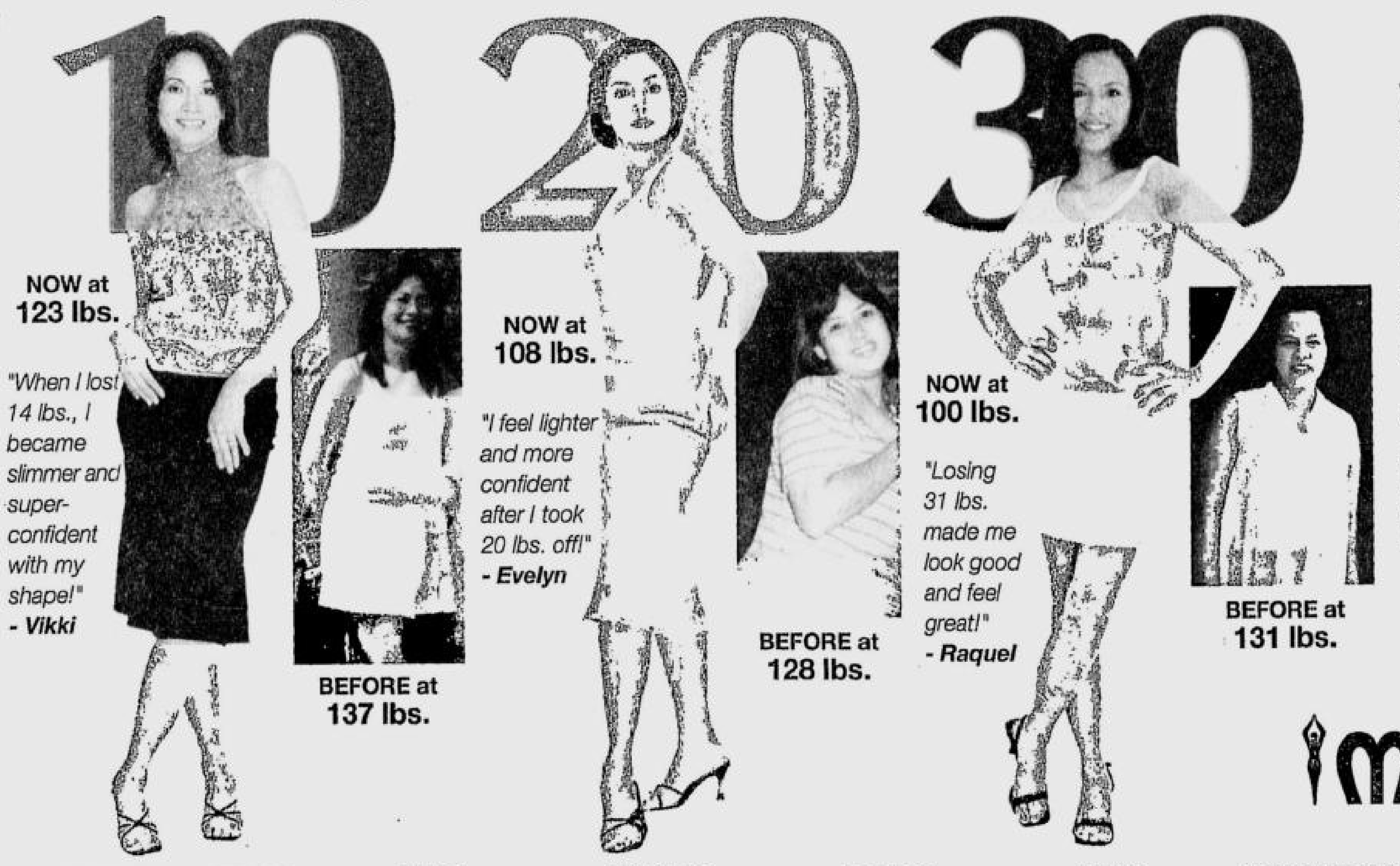
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Brunei sultan relives cadet days in PMA visit

By Frank Cimatu and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Many military cadets end up as presidents and generals, but only a few, like Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam, end up as true-blue princes of their land.

Sultan Bolkiah visited the Philippine Military Academy here on Tuesday to relive his days as a cadet, having graduated from the Royal Academy in Sandhurst, United Kingdom, in 1966.

"Nearly 40 years ago, like (Defense) Secretary (Angelo) Reyes, I was like so many of you young cadets here," Bolkiah, who is also supreme commander of the Royal Brunei armed forces, told PMA cadets at the academy mess hall.

"I was learning the demands of a military career at an academy just like yours. My own duties may since had left me in a different direction. They have not, however, made me forget the lifelong training I received.

"Nor have I ever forgotten the special responsibilities placed on those whose careers are dedicated to the defense of their nation."

It was his second visit to the PMA since 1993. He and his party flew in four Lear jets at the Loakan Airport, about 100 meters from here, at 10 a.m.

The sultan requested to be flown in by an Airbus, but the Loakan Airport could not accommodate its size.

The highest-ranking Muslim cadet, Cadet First Class Roland Salah, failed to meet the Muslim royalty because he was undergoing preparatory training as a graduating cadet at the naval shipyards in the Visayas.

But Maj. Gen. Edilberto Adan, PMA superintendent, gave the prince full state honors with a full complement of cadets, including Muslim upperclassmen.

Bolkiah later ate with the cadets at the mess hall.

Reyes said Bolkiah's visit was meant to enhance the close bilateral relations between the Philippines and Brunei.

"This will include the (putting up of) enhanced intelligence network between the two countries in the fight against global terrorism," he said.

He said the arrangement would include joint naval exercises between the two countries on April 7-13. The exercises form part of a memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation signed by the Philippines and Brunei in August 2001.

This would also include the deployment of three Philippine Navy ships near the shores of Brunei, Reyes said.

Bolkiah was accompanied by an entourage of 22 military and government officials, and reporters.

The prince said the military should be a mixture of the traditional and the modern.

"Fresh thinking is called for. This will certainly be based on traditional values, traditional discipline and traditional loyalty. But many new skills are demanded now, both technical and intellectual. Above all, profound and sophisticated understanding of the special nature of modern change is required," he said.

He also pardoned outstanding punishments meted out on 146 cadets.

SULTAN Bolkiah: Snappy salute for a former PMA cadet.

No fare hike until end of February

By Abigail L. Ho

EVEN with the rising costs of petroleum products, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board assured commuters that fares would remain at current levels, at least until the end of February.

LTFRB chair Dante Lantin said in an interview yesterday that as oil giants Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Petron Corp. had not yet increased pump prices, the possibility of a fare hike anytime soon was not that big.

The Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association Monday threatened to petition for a P1 fare hike if the two oil companies would follow the lead of Caltex Phil. and increase their pump prices.

"They will wait for Petron and Shell to raise their prices. But given the developments, there will be no fare hike within February, due to the processes involved," Lantin said.

Petitions for increases have to go through a series of public hearings.

Caltex on Friday raised gasoline prices by 55 centavos per liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 45 centavos per liter. This was the oil firm's third hike this month.

Meanwhile, Shell and Petron decided to maintain their prices while continuing to monitor both the world crude market and the movement of the peso against the dollar.

Petron corporate communications manager Virginia Ruivivar had earlier said that the company would no longer increase prices this month.

She also echoed an earlier statement of Shell, which said that it would continue to monitor world prices this month, with any price changes to be implemented in February.

'TICKING TIME BOMB'

Gov't debt growing by P1M per minute, Recto figures

By Cynthia D. Balana

GOVERNMENT debt grew by P1 million per minute, P57.1 million per hour or P1.37 billion per day last year, according to Sen. Ralph Recto.

"The cat is out of the bag," Recto said.

"This is what the debt meter registered last year. Our debt clock shows we are sitting atop a ticking financial time bomb," he said.

Recto said the national debt ballooned from P2.8 trillion in 2001 to P3.3 trillion in 2002.

Alarmed by the figures, Sen. Joker Arroyo urged Congress to put a cap on government borrowings, a practice most finance secretaries resort to in order to plug the deficit and fund the budget.

"This has got to stop," Arroyo said, of the practice of government of borrowing money every time revenue collections did not meet the country's budgetary requirements.

"But it cannot be stopped because no incumbent President would ever agree to a debt ceiling," he said.

This is because Presidents believe their hands would be tied if they were not allowed to borrow at will by a law enacted by Congress, he said.

But since President Macapagal-Arroyo is not standing for election, Arroyo said, a law could be enacted to take effect on July 1, 2004 or after she stepped down from office.

He said the United States and other responsible countries had debt ceilings.

RECTO

"A debt ceiling law is quite simple. When the debt ceiling is reached and revenue collections are down, the secretary of finance cannot just borrow money," he said.

Congress, he said, would then be allowed to review the government's finances before the President could ask the legislature to raise the debt ceiling.

Arroyo said that at present, the finance secretary can borrow any amount at will without restrictions. That is why the public debt rose with each administration, he said.

"Presidents borrow as if there was no tomorrow. Why? Because they know they do not have to pay for it. It is their successor who pays," Arroyo said.

"Worse, carte blanche to borrow breeds indolence in our revenue collectors because they know that if targets are not met, the secretary of finance would borrow money to remedy the problem," he said.

Recto pointed out that four debt payments equal the cost of building four classrooms per minute, or one kilometer of expressway.

He agreed with Arroyo on the need to legislate a cap on borrowings.

"We cannot take out a mortgage on future revenues to finance current expenditures without creating an indentured race of future Filipinos," Recto said.

He said the government's "panic borrowing" in the last quarter of 2002 surely pushed the debt stock beyond the P3.4-trillion mark.

He said if this was the case, the P500-billion increase in the government debt last year was on the conservative side.

To service the gargantuan debt, Recto said the government will have to cough up P425.7 billion this year, of which P230.7 billion will be for interest payments and P195 billion for the amortization of the principal.

On a daily basis, Recto said, the government will be paying creditors P1.164 billion.

Thirty centavos of every budget peso will go to interest payments this year and all the taxes that will be collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue will not be enough to cover the P425.7 billion needed to service the debt, he said.

ALL ABOUT VAT

'BIR-on-wheels' to educate entertainers

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue said yesterday it had mobilized a special team called "BIR-On-Wheels" to help entertainers and other professionals understand the value-added tax (VAT) system, which requires them to pay a 10-percent indirect tax starting this year.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno, in a press statement, said he had directed revenue officers to "reach out" to the entertainers and help clarify common misconception about the 10-percent indirect tax.

Parayno gave the order after leaders of the entertainment industry agreed to work with the BIR and the finance department in conducting an information campaign among entertainers on the E-VAT system.

"Instead of the entertainers going to us for information on E-VAT, our BIR-On-Wheels will reach out to them and assist them in understanding the new system," the BIR commissioner said.

Entertainers have protested the implementation of the E-VAT system and the 10-percent indirect tax, claiming the government is singling them out in its tax effort.

After raising the creditable withholding taxes in 2001 to 20 percent from 10 percent for entertainers and athletes, the government had started to implement the value-added tax system this month. The system requires taxpayers classified as professionals to pay the 10-percent indirect tax.

Some entertainers still insist that the 20-percent withholding tax was separate and distinct from the income tax when in fact, it was just an advanced collection of the income tax.

But Parayno explained that increasing the withholding tax was designed to protect the government against bad habits of some taxpayers, who adopt creative accounting and compute their final income tax in such a way that by the end of the tax payment season, it would match the 10 percent withheld by government.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, for his part, disclosed that the BIR was studying a plan to level the playing field and also increase the withholding tax for lawyers, accountants and doctors to 20 percent.

Government data showed that in 2001, individuals paid P80.24 billion in total taxes. These include salaried workers, business executives, and professionals.

Of the amount, wage earners paid P66.3 billion. Wage earners or the fixed income earners have no opportunity to cheat the government since their tax obligations are automatically withheld by their employers via the withholding tax.

Professionals, on the other hand, pay taxes based on how much income they declare, And since most of them, like doctors, do not issue receipts, there is no gauge how much they are earning, the BIR said.

It is not unusual that a fixed income earner who earns P500,000 a year, pays over 30 percent of his salary in taxes. On the other hand, an entertainer who earns P500,000 a month pays only 20 percent in taxes, the BIR said.

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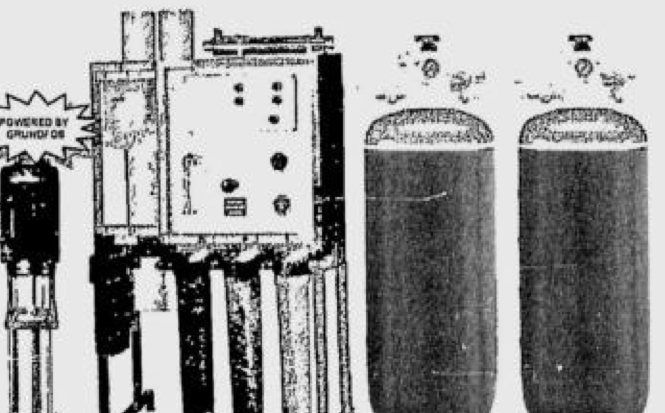

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Lawyer seeks filing of graft raps vs Piatco detractors

By Norman Bordadora

FORMER Solicitor General Frank Chavez yesterday called for graft charges against government officials who have been "strategizing" to discredit the Philippine International Air Terminals, Co.'s contract to build Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Chavez said that the Piatco contract already passed the scrutiny of several congressional committees, the Ombudsman, a lower court, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, the Office of the Solicitor general and the National Economic Development Authority.

"This insidious campaign is nothing more that a smokescreen to divert attention from the real people who should be charged with corruption for plotting to wrest control of Naia 3 from Piatco," Chavez said.

"They are no other than the government officials and business interests which I have unmasked before the Supreme Court on the first day oral arguments were presented on the validity of the Piatco contract," Chavez said in a statement.

For instance, Chavez said former Presidential Adviser on Strategic Concerns Gloria Tan-Climaco has a lot of explaining to on her "strategizing" that threw a wedge between the German investor of Naia 3 and Piatco.

"Ms Climaco has so conveniently faded into the background after failing to explain the $100 million in apparent commission that someone will get from easing out the Filipino partners of Fraport," Chavez said.

Chavez was referring to an exchange of notes between Fraport AG and Climaco wherein Fraport asked the Philippine government to buy it out for $300 million.

"Wonder of wonders, Climaco counter-offered to buy out Fraport for $400 million, raising questions as where the $100 million in excess of the original quotation of the German firm," Chavez said.

Austrian to be deported

AN AUSTRIAN wanted for the attempted murder of his wife has been arrested in the Philippines and will be deported soon, the immigration bureau said yesterday.

Elixer Amora, 39, was caught in Tagbilaran City on Jan. 15 but was only turned over to immigration officials in Manila on Monday, the bureau said in a statement.

An international warrant was issued by the Vienna-based Interpol after Amora entered the Philippines illegally following an alleged attempt to kill his wife on Sept. 16, the bureau said.

He is to be blacklisted and banned from reentering the Philippines. *AFP*

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RP won't ask US, EU to recall terrorist tag

From page A1

nizations, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

And the United States itself will not take the CPP off its list of foreign terrorist organizations, according to Karen Kelley, US Embassy spokesperson.

"It doesn't really connect with what the Philippine government decides to do. It (RP) is a sovereign state. The US designated them (CPP and NPA) as foreign terrorist organizations (based) on its perspective of those organizations," Kelley said.

The designation allows the United States and EU members to freeze the assets of the CPP.

Bunye said it was the government that had asked the EU to brand the communist rebels as terrorists. "It's very difficult to backtrack on that," he said. Besides, the rebels have only themselves to blame for their "overt acts of killing innocent people," he said.

Bunye reiterated Malacañang's position on the terrorist tag of the CPP a day after Jose Ma. Sison, chief political consultant of the CPP's political umbrella, the National Democratic Front (NDF), rejected the draft of a peace agreement approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But Luis Jalandoni, head of the NDF negotiating panel, denied that the NDF had rejected the draft peace agreement, even as he urged the government to take steps to remove the CPP from the US and EU lists of terrorist organizations.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo said the peace talks with the NDF would resume if the government helped to remove the terrorist tag on Sison and the CPP-NPA.

Ocampo, a former NDF spokesperson, noted that the CPP was placed on the US and EU lists of terrorists in response to the lobby of the Philippine government. "So the government should also take steps to remove them from the list," he said.

If the government fails to do that, he said, the NDF is in a "reasonable position" to reject the resumption of the peace talks.

The head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said the killing of former NPA members upon the orders of the CPP leadership showed that the communist group had turned to terrorism.

"The claim of others that the NPA is terroristic has been proven, unfortunately, by such acts," said CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo when asked to comment on the killing of former NPA chief Romulo Kintanar by his former comrades.

In an interview on GMA-7, Jalandoni said the NDF had not rejected the draft peace agreement.

Unofficial statement

"People say many things about the draft but those are unofficial statements," said Jalandoni, who is based in Utrecht, The Netherlands, like Sison.

On Monday, Sison said the draft was nothing more than a demand for the surrender of the principles and weapons of the NPA. CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal also said the CPP was rejecting the draft, which he described as a "surrender agreement."

The draft calls for the dissolution of the NPA as an armed group and requires the rebels to swear allegiance to the government. In exchange, the rebels would be given absolute amnesty and livelihood assistance.

The NDF had yet to receive a copy of the government draft agreement and was thus in no position to either accept or reject it, according to Jalandoni.

"We are waiting for Attorney (Silvestre) Bello (III) and the rest of the government delegation here in Utrecht so we can have exploratory talks on what this draft final agreement is," Jalandoni said.

But Jalandoni said the NDF panel remained committed to the peace negotiations. He said, however, that the government could not impose the draft agreement on the NDF. "Negotiation should be a two-way process," he said.

One issue that both the government and NDF panels have yet to resolve is the inclusion of Sison and the NPA on the EU's terror list.

Jalandoni said the lobbying done by Foreign Secretary Blas Ople to include the NPA in the EU list violated the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantees. "We cannot expect the removal of Comrade Sison's name from the FTO list to be addressed in the draft agreement. There is a need for the government to take official steps to have this done," he said.

Asked to comment on Sison's statement that the proposed agreement was a "surrender" document, Bunye said: "We believe they're just posturing."

"If the NDF is sincerely for peace, it will give this draft accord a chance," Bunye said in a statement. "The deepest hopes of the Filipino people are expressed therein." He said Sison was not a member of the NDF negotiating panel.

Bunye noted that the draft agreement "has the support of the Cabinet, including the defense department and the armed forces."

Brushing off Sison's declaration, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the government negotiating panel, led by Bello, had been directed by the President to "touch base with the NDF."

He said the President would wait for the NDF to issue a formal rejection of the draft peace agreement, "not a press release," before the government finally ends its peace efforts with the communist rebels.

Talk rather than kill

Quevedo said the killing could erode the credibility of the rebel group and its revolutionary struggle. "So I think there is a need for peace talks and no more of this, which might be interpreted as terroristic. Talk rather than kill," he said.

Novaliches Bishop Teodoro Bacani also urged the CPP to return to the negotiating table. "I agree with (Quevedo) that we should talk rather than kill," he said.

Asked if the CPP deserved the terrorist tag for the killing of Kintanar, Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. did not give a categorical answer. "I don't know if it was a special sparrow unit or if it was a policy adopted by the organization (that brought about the killing). That should be looked into," he said.

Reyes said the government had not officially tagged the CPP as a terrorist group.

He said the Macapagal administration had resisted the urge to tag the CPP as a terrorist group as a negotiation ploy. "That's part of our negotiating strategy. We offer them the opportunity to negotiate or find a negotiated solution to this (34-year-old insurgency). If they do, then perhaps the terrorist label can be lifted," he said.

But Reyes said the NPA's terrorist tag had been "borne out by recent developments." He was referring to last week's assassination of Kintanar.

"Their actions—the killings, the destruction of infrastructure—have confirmed their tag as terrorists," Reyes said. "As long as they do not refrain from doing what they are doing, then they will continue to be (labeled as) terrorists."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, asked the government to work for the lifting of the CPP's terrorist tag if it wanted to pursue the peace process.

"We have no control over what the Americans or the Europeans do. But we definitely have control over whether or not to pursue the CPP-NDF group as terrorists," Biazon said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon scoffed at Sison's rejection of the draft. "They haven't even seen it, yet they rejected it outright. Maybe they have no interest (in the peace process)," Drilon told reporters. *With reports from Blanche S. Rivera, Juliet L. Javellana and Gerald G. Lacuarta in Manila; Vincent Cabreza and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and Jhunnex Napallacan PDI Visayas Bureau*

Ex-NPA chief Kintanar to have Christian funeral

From page A1

Justice," Joy Asuncion broke into tears when she was asked to say a few words.

God is good

"We are lucky that God is good because Rolly and I managed to push on with our lives despite our trials," she said in Filipino. "Since he died, I have been asking myself why a good man had to die. But I draw strength from the support of our comrades."

Asuncion described her husband of 15 years as a "good soldier" and a "noble son of his country."

"I am proud and happy that he was part of my life," she said.

Asuncion bristled at Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal's statement that her husband had been executed for his "crimes" against the revolutionary movement.

"Rolly told me once that history will be the only judge," she said.

Reunion of 'rejectionists'

The six-day wake for Kintanar at the Funeraria Paz was a reunion of sorts for the "rejectionists," who broke away from the leadership of CPP founding chair Jose Ma. Sison during an ideological struggle in the early 1990s.

The other night Kintanar's former comrades in the underground called Sison and other CPP leaders "ruthless terrorists."

They also called Sison an "armchair revolutionary."

In a manifesto, they denounced Kintanar's "cowardly murder."

The CPP's armed wing, the New People's Army, had admitted executing Kintanar.

"The cowardly murder of Ka Rolly Kintanar was the handiwork of ruthless terrorists. NPA perpetrators of such terrorism acted upon the orders of Sison and the Tiamzon couple who are at the helm of the CPP-NPA-NDF leadership. Such is a desperate device to tighten their illegitimate hold on the central leadership of the CPP-NPA, and to intimidate into submission many dissenters and independent-minded individuals in their organization," the statement read.

The manifesto was signed by Rodolfo Salas, Angelito Mendoza, Benjamin de Vera, Horacio Morales, Arno Sanidad, Akbayan party-list Rep. Etta Rosales, Diego Cagahastian and Mauro Gia-Samonte. More signatures were being gathered even after the statement had been released.

More significant

"Most of us believe, having been one-time comrades of Ka Rolly in the revolutionary and underground movement, and knowing his record within and outside of the movement, that Kintanar's achievements at serving the people could be more significant than Sison's, who was largely and until now an armchair revolutionary," the statement said.

"Like most of us who have been duped by Sison, Ka Rolly endeavored to struggle for basic social justice and reforms openly, and has supported a peaceful resolution to the conflict in which he was a major player, through dialogue and political settlement," it said.

Grocery money

The signatories noted that while Kintanar was initiating a livelihood program for former rebels, "Sison was acting like a cry baby over his reduced grocery money and little loss in his otherwise very comfortable life in The Netherlands when he was declared an international terrorist."

At a press conference, Rosales called on "other groups to work with restraint and sobriety" amid rumors that groups loyal to Kintanar would avenge his death. "We might finish each other off," she said.

Till end of time

Kintanar's widow said her family "will try to bring about justice for Rolly. If need be, until the end of time."

"I swear by Rolly's grave that never again will we be allowed to be used for unjust causes," she said.

She also called on the military "not to use this (killing) for witchhunting and for highlighting further our differences."

For his part, De Vera objected to statements made by Rosal that Kintanar was killed for his "crimes" against the movement.

"We endured a lot of hardships. But we never resorted to kidnappings, robbery and other crimes," De Vera said. De Vera was a former comrade of Kintanar's in the NPA's Mindanao Command.

Good feelings

"There are good feelings around here, and the feelings are very positive," Rosales told the INQUIRER. "There's an old saying that a revolution devours its own children. But it's good to see that the children are still devoted to noble causes."

According to Edina Almodal, most of those present at the wake have renounced armed struggle in favor of peaceful means to fight for their cause.

"We still try to serve the people in our way," Almodal said.

Kintanar's skills as a fighter came to the fore of reminiscences.

At the tribute for Kintanar the other night, Ric Reyes of Akbayan recalled how their comrade frequently displayed his proficiency with a firearm.

But Reyes also spoke of how Kintanar kept his cool despite criticisms from the Sison camp in the wake of the party split.

Rosales said Kintanar was a "very democratic person."

"He kept quiet, and he respected differences," she said.

Solidarity

The death of Kintanar served to consolidate the "rejectionists" who had in turn splintered because of "disagreements."

A contingent led by lawyer JV Bautista from Sanlakas, a group that Filemon Lagman founded, issued a statement declaring: "We are one with the people in the condemnation of the ruthless and treacherous killing of Romulo Kintanar."

Also spotted at the wake was Nilo de la Cruz, chief of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade.

"Most likely, [the Lagman and Kintanar murders] were carried out by old comrades, not necessarily the same gunmen," De la Cruz said. "I hope they start thinking about what they are doing."

Among those present at the tribute to Kintanar were his cousin Cebu Rep. Simeon Kintanar, UP president Francisco Nemenzo, academician Renato Constantino Jr., Ma. Serena Diokno, Charito Planas, Angelito Mendoza and Benjamin de Vera.

Conspicuously missing was Arturo Tabara, also of the RPA-ABB. *With a report from TJ Burgonio*

No overdose of spirituality in cancer cases

From page A1

could bring to their patients. In fact, many say it has worked well for cancer patients.

Ad libitum, or as freely as the patient desires, said Dr. Corazon Ngelangel of the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center and the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital when asked how much dose of spirituality she would "prescribe" to her patients.

She said spirituality should complement medical treatments.

There was a study among Filipino cancer patients, Ngelangel said, which showed that one's religious beliefs sustained a good quality of life.

Another study showed that 99 percent of Filipino cancer patients considered *"sariling pagdarasal"* (one's own prayers) as a form of treatment. Ninety-four (94) percent considered other people's prayers for them as a form of treatment.

Ngelangel said spirituality could be invoked during any situation—during one's triumphs or crises.

"Cancer is such an exemplary disease wherein spirituality is intensified, not only when the cancer is in the terminal stage but also when there is a high probability of cure," she said.

Dr. Cecilia A. Ladines Llave, chair of the UP-PGH Cancer Institute, told the INQUIRER that she would not prescribe spirituality in fixed dosage like she would chemotherapy drugs or radiation therapy. It would instead depend on the patient.

"The dosage would be on a case-by-case basis, depending on how much the patient needs and how much he could take at a given moment. Some patients are already highly spiritual; others are much less; a few are probably not spiritual at all," she said.

Because most patients at the UP-PGH are already in the advanced stages of cancer and are thus aware that the threat of the disease on their lives is great, Llave said they "almost never need to be given a massive 'starter dose' of spirituality."

On the other hand, Dr. Valorie Fullon Chan, head of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center oncology section, prescribes the maximum allowable spirituality for her cancer patients.

Dr. Antonio Villalon, a medical oncologist at the UP-PGH and a board member of the Philippine Cancer Society, prescribes spirituality in full doses at the start, then maintenance at regular intervals.

"Spirituality cannot be separated from the physical being. It strengthens the mind, thus influencing the body," he said.

Scientific basis

Is there any scientific basis that spirituality works wonders in cancer patients?

Llave said there were studies which showed that patients who were less tense, more hopeful or more optimistic got well faster or suffered less complications during treatment.

But Llave said she had not come across any scientific proof of spirituality resulting in miraculous cures.

"I have heard stories of such recovery, as I suspect many doctors have. But our usual view is that those cases are actually remissions—a period of improvement in the cancer patient's health, but often a very temporary improvement because the cancer eventually recurs," she said.

How popular is spirituality among the medical community?

Llave said spirituality was not something doctors hold annual conventions for or something they would write a scientific article about.

"But I have yet to meet a physician who is not spiritual in his own way," said Llave.

Understanding life

Physicians can't help but be spiritual, she said, because they deal with life or the end of life.

She said medicine and the biological sciences had been around for a long time yet until now humans could still not fully understand life.

"Strictly speaking, a fetus in a woman's womb is a foreign matter and must be rejected by the mother's body. Yet the pregnancy (continues) and almost always the baby and the mother survive. On the other hand, we have patients to whom we give the best that modern medicine could provide, yet they die," she said.

A message that doctors constantly get, Llave said, is that "we are not God; that something or someone greater than us runs this universe. And in the greater scheme of things, we are just tools, no different and no more valuable than the scalpels, stethoscopes and thermometers we use."

But doctors cannot be spiritual all the way.

"To be useful to our fellowmen, to be true to our vocation, we must give priority to exercising what we were trained to do—to treat the physical body. We will treat a person to the best of our abilities, regardless of that person's spiritual beliefs or lack of them. We hope we can touch that person's soul, too, but we always know that we have enough problems in our hands just dealing with that person's physical wellbeing," Llave said.

But whenever patients discover their spirituality, through the help of their doctors, physicians get a lot of fulfillment, she said.

In fact several cancer specialists helped the Philippine Cancer Society and cancer support organizations in organizing the Jan. 18 prayer rally for cancer survivors and cancer patients at the Tanghalang Francisco Balagtas at the CCP Complex.

PNP offers P1-M ...

From page A1

was behind the Jan. 23 assassination of Romulo "Rolly" Kintanar, the former chief of the CPP's armed wing.

Delfin said that in the early 1990s during the Ramos administration, the reward system against top CPP-NPA leaders was abolished on the request of Luis Jalandoni, consultant of the communist-led National Democratic Front.

He said that despite a recent photo showing Rosal getting a haircut against a backdrop of a clump of trees, the latter could be living in an urban center in Southern Tagalog.

"If you noticed, he's become fair-skinned. If he has been living in the jungles, he should have been dark," Delfin said, showing reporters pictures taken of Rosal late last year.

Delfin also showed pictures of Tirso Alcantara alias Bert, alleged head of the NPA and secretary of the CPP Regional Party Committee.

"By showing their photos, we want to flush them out," he said.

Citing intelligence information, Delfin said it was Alcantara who supervised the operations of the hit squad that carried out Kintanar's assassination. He said "hit men" Philip Limjoco and Bartolome Melchor were both based in Southern Tagalog.

Nani not out ...

From page A1

At the inauguration yesterday of the 500-megawatt San Lorenzo power plant in Sta. Rita, Batangas, the President introduced Perez as her "Cabinet officer for regional development (CORD) for Southern Tagalog."

The former congressman of Batangas was appointed CORD for Region 4 in June last year.

But when asked yesterday by reporters about his title, Perez appeared to take offense.

He said he was helping Ms Macapagal but "without an official function."

When asked by a reporter if he would request to be replaced as CORD for Region 4, he shot back that he just might recommend the reporter for the position.

The President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, when asked later about the matter, said he was not aware that Perez was still a CORD.

Bunye said that by the title itself, only a Cabinet member could be named a CORD.

Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez accused Perez in November of extorting $2 million from him, a charge that the latter immediately denied.

After hanging tough for weeks, during which he also took a leave of absence to prepare his rebuttal of Jimenez's accusation, Perez resigned as justice chief on Dec. 27. But earlier, he announced that he would "definitely" be back at his post after his leave had lapsed.

Many believed that he was forced to resign because the President "extended" what was to have been only a 30-day leave.

Jimenez has since been extradited to the United States on charges of, among others, wire fraud and illegal contributions to the Democratic Party. *Reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan and Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Without FPJ, Erap will settle for Ping as bet for '04

By Volt Contreras

PING would do.

Action movie superstar Fernando Poe Jr. is still ex-President Joseph Estrada's top choice as the opposition's standard bearer for the 2004 presidential race.

Of his bosom buddy's celebrated resistance to the prospect, Estrada said: "I need to hear from Ronnie's (own) mouth that he is not running."

But just in case FPJ stuck to his alleged decision not to run, Estrada said he had advised his leaders in the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) to "start preparing" Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

He made this statement following a report quoting San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora as saying that Lacson was emerging as the opposition's bet, since Poe had not responded to calls for him to enter politics.

Reached by phone yesterday, Estrada's swift reaction to the report was, "No, no, no. *Wala pang malinaw*(nothing's clear). Everything is still open. *Nagulat nga ako, eh* (I was caught by surprise)."

He said the matter was not even taken up during a meeting with Zamora over the weekend.

It was with PMP Secretary-General Lito Banayo that he discussed the party's choice last Saturday, Estrada said. He theorized

LACSON

POE

that Zamora picked it up from Banayo. "*Baka na*-misinterpret *n'ya lang ang sinabi ni* Lito (he could have misinterpreted whatever Lito told him)."

Estrada said what he told Banayo was: "If FPJ won't run, let's go for Ping and prepare him now."

But Banayo, interviewed also by phone yesterday, had a different version. He quoted Estrada as saying: "*Hindi na siguro tatakbo si* FPJ *dahil pangingiti-ngiti lang* (there's a slim chance FPJ would run; he just kept smiling) when I last talked with him. There was no commitment. *Paikutin n'yo na si* Ping; *maghanda na kayo*(send Ping to do the rounds; you should prepare)."

Estrada told the INQUIRER he was awaiting survey results before picking his bet. "It's too early (to say anything for sure)," he said. "Maybe it will start getting clearer exactly a year before the elections."

Asked whether he would make any more attempts to convince Poe, Estrada claimed he last talked with his "*compadre*" in August last year. "I told him he would make a formidable candidate, and that he could unify this country."

Clearer for others

What remains hazy for Estrada is apparently clearer for other PMP officials.

"I think Lacson is our man for 2004, unless there are new developments," Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) vice president for Mindanao, said yesterday.

In a phone interview, Dilangalen said it was still a long way before the party had to make a final decision, "but we have to settle for somebody for the time being." And for the time being, it's Lacson, who is from the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP).

Dilangalen stressed that PMP was inclined to join forces with other opposition parties to back up one candidate.

A common candidate is also what LDP members are hankering for, according to LDP Reps. Rolex Suplico and Gilbert Remulla. The two solons admitted they were flattered that PMP leaders like Zamora would set their eyes on Lacson.

Suplico said the LDP had been searching for a presidential bet since Sen. Edgardo Angara gave up the race.

"It's good to know that Lacson enjoys the PMP's support of the PMP," Suplico said in a separate interview. Once the LDP finds a standard bearer, he said, the party should be ready to formally negotiate with the other opposition groups. *With Christine O. Avendaño*

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17 rebels slain in Army raid on Moro camp

SEVENTEEN suspected rebels were killed and 10 others were wounded when Army soldiers launched a surprise attack on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Camp Usman in the Bukidnon-Cotabato boundary on Monday noon, according to the military.

Army Maj. Johnny Macanas, 4th Infantry Division spokesperson, said about 260 families had already been evacuated to two villages in Damulog, Bukidnon, for fear of getting caught in the crossfire.

Macanas said the soldiers finally overran Usman, a newly established camp situated in Damulog and the towns of Carmen and Arakan in Cotabato, after almost five hours of fighting.

He did not identify the fatalities.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu denied the military report.

Braganza to press case against solon

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

NEWLY designated Press Secretary Hernani Braganza yesterday vowed to pursue his campaign to have Nueva Ecija Rep. Raul Villareal expelled from the House of Representatives.

Braganza, a former congressman, appeared before the House ethics committee which yesterday opened hearings into charges of unethical conduct, grossly abusive behavior and conduct unbecoming a member of the House against Villareal.

The case stemmed from an incident on Nov. 26 during deliberations on the budget of the agrarian reform department, which Braganza then headed.

Braganza and Villareal swore at each other and nearly came to blows inside the session hall over a P23.2-million farm-to-market road in Villareal's district.

"Congressman Villareal should not be allowed to drag this institution into the level of disrepute he himself has gone down to," Braganza said in a statement that was distributed to reporters after the hearing.

Villareal, a member of the Nationalist People's Coalition, was equally adamant. He said he would not apologize even at the risk of expulsion from the chamber.

"Why should I apologize? No, I will not, even to the extent that he said I will be expelled," Villareal said.

The ethics committee chair, Rep. Antonio Abaya, gave the two 10 days to file their rejoinders. The committee has the power to recommend penalties, including expulsion, on House members.

Braganza said he filed the case "out of genuine concern for the integrity and reputation" of the House where he represented Pangasinan for two terms before joining the Cabinet.

"I believe that the welfare of the House of Representatives as an institution should be protected even or most especially at the expense of a member who has brought dishonor to it by his disorderly behavior," Braganza said.

"Congressman Villareal has regrettably not been able to imbibe such honorable conduct exemplified by most, if not all, of my former colleagues at the House," he said.

In his affidavit, Braganza said Villareal cursed him without provocation when he approached the latter and asked him what his problems were with his department.

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Orgy of cheating

EDITORIAL

BY NOW everyone probably knows that Dolphy was the biggest taxpayer among movie stars for the year 2001. He paid close to P2.5 million in taxes that year, a sum that must have looked astronomical to his legions of fans. But what most Filipinos don't know is that Dolphy would have paid more—very much more—if he were just like some of his richest fans.

Industry sources say Dolphy is paid a cool P1 million for every new episode of his long-running comedy series on television. That would earn him, say, P40 million a year, after allowing for the times when some episodes are replayed. Throw in the movies he produces and stars in and his commercial endorsements and he probably grosses P50 million yearly.

If a salaried executive were to earn that kind of money (which is a big if, of course), he would have paid something like P16 million in income taxes after taking away a maximum of P64,000 in personal deductions. That is 32 percent of his taxable income, since he falls into the highest tax bracket. But Dolphy paid only P2.5 million while other big names in the entertainment industry paid even less. Sharon Cuneta, who has a weekly television program and so many endorsements aside from appearing in movies, was way down the list at 19th place, just above German Moreno who paid a little more than P200,000. Meaning Cuneta and Moreno paid much less than the friendly bank manager in the neighborhood. And what about Richard Gomez and Ruffa Mae Quinto, some of the most vocal protesters against the collection of the 10-percent value-added tax (VAT)? These popular stars paid even less.

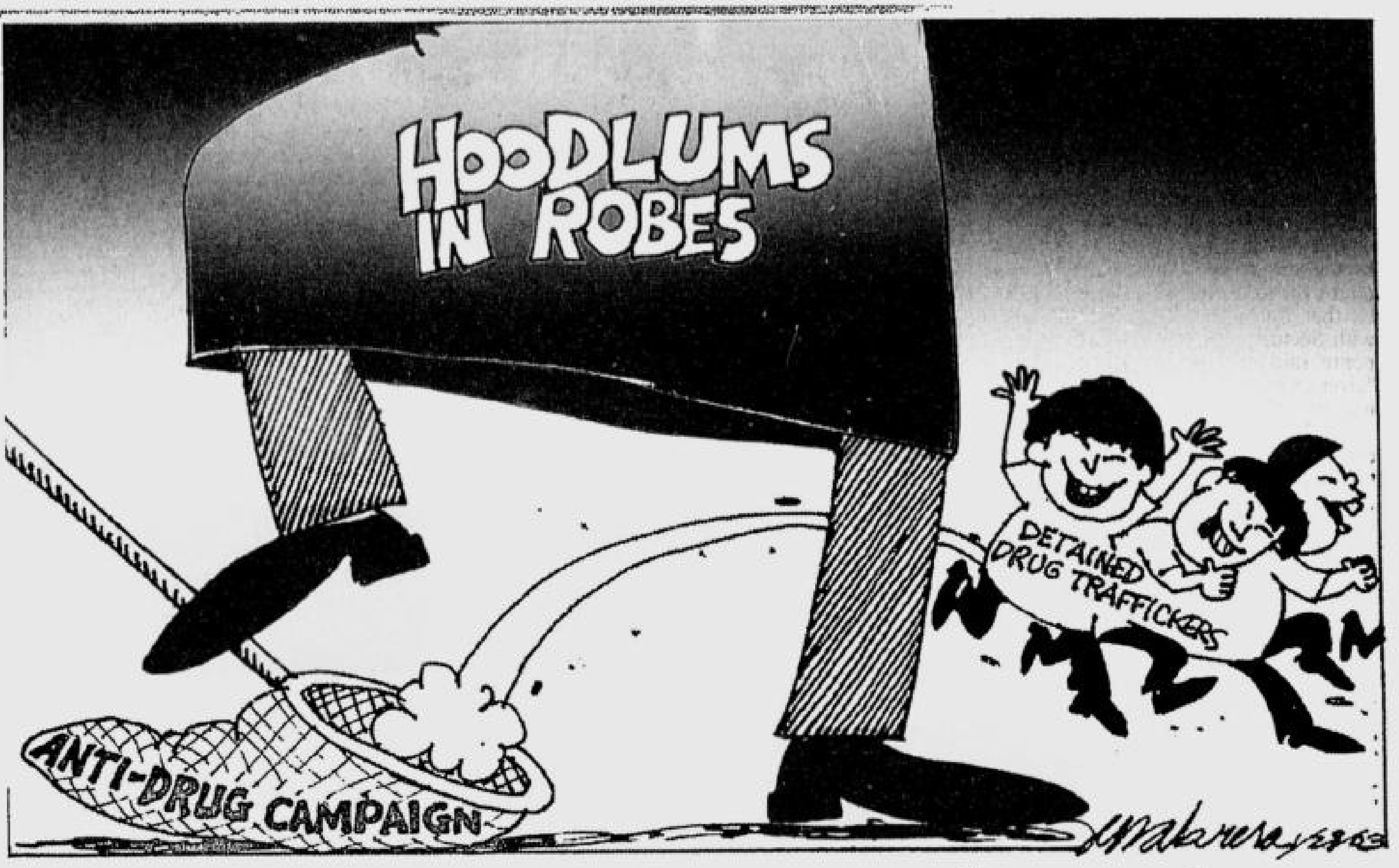
How did this happen? Well, the rich and famous are not like the rest of us. Movie stars and entertainers can claim tax deductions for just about anything they buy and any service they get. If they have drivers and bodyguards, they can deduct their salaries from their taxable income. If they eat in fancy restaurants or throw a party, they can charge that as a necessary expense. While a secretary doesn't get any tax deduction for having a manicure, a movie star does. Movie stars and entertainers can even deduct from their taxable income all the money they spend on clothes, while an ordinary worker cannot, even though nobody goes to work without any clothes on (except some movie stars).

But no matter how much they splurge on such items, which are considered necessary for the practice of their trade or profession, it would still be difficult to throw away so many millions in a year's time. This is where "creative accounting" or simple under-declaration of income comes in. Smart accountants can simply make incomes vanish while some people simply do not report income earned.

This orgy of cheating is not confined to the entertainment industry. Professionals, or those who need a license to practice their profession like doctors, lawyers and accountants, are apparently into it too. According to the Department of Finance, professionals and entertainers, who number about 30,000, paid only P620 million in income taxes in 2001. That comes up to an average of less than P21,000, which is about what a clerk in a medium-sized company pays to the government in a year. And they have the gall to protest loudly that they are being harassed by the government?

But even in their protest they engage in a lot of dissembling. For instance, they have tried to project the VAT as an added tax. In fact, anyone can always get a refund if the VAT withheld exceeds the income tax due from him. They have also claimed that the VAT will hit their poorer co-workers, like cameramen and back-up singers, hardest. In fact, workers earning less than P550,000 a year have to pay only a 3-percent VAT. And they have tried to win public sympathy by claiming that ultimately it's the moviegoer, the patient or the lawyer's client, who will pay for the VAT. If that were so, why are they protesting too much? The fact is, few doctors issue receipts to their patients or lawyers to their clients and they charge whatever amount they want, with or without the VAT.

If the collection of the VAT will result in higher professional fees and prices of movie tickets, so be it. The added burden should be lightened somewhat by the thought that the rich and famous among professionals and entertainers are contributing their fair share to the government's coffers. That is, if that ideal could be achieved at all.



Let public enjoy Arroceros Park every day

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AT LAST, after nine long years of being like a secret garden, the Arroceros Forest Park will be open to the public. We are supposed to cheer and jump for joy. Winner Foundation president Regina Roces-Paterno expected as much from me when she called and announced, "We are following your suggestion and that of Mayor Alfredo Lim to open the Arroceros Park to the public."

"Wonderful!" I exclaimed and did cheer until I learned that it would be open only three days a week, from Friday to Sunday. It would be closed to the public for four days a week, longer than it would be open. Big deal! I couldn't cheer that. It should be open the whole week. That's what a park is for, *'di ba*, for the public to enjoy. At the most, it should be closed only one day for maintenance, on Mondays—never on a Sunday because that's when families go out.

If Winner Foundation would have its way, the park would remain closed until the year 2013, 10 years from now, when its development is scheduled to be finished. That should be the longest development period for a park in the world, almost 20 years, and I do not know if Winner Foundation wanted to land in the Guinness Book of World Records for that. For its pre- "premature" opening, we have to thank former Mayor Lim who told them to open the park. It was Mayor Lim who turned over to Winner Foundation the former Department of Education compound for development into a park.

I asked the former mayor when I saw him at the Kapihan sa Manila if it is true that the memorandum of agreement between them allowed Winner to keep the public out of the park until 2013.

Lim was surprised. *"Hindi totoo 'yon,"* he said. "It should be open to the public. I will tell them to open it." He did. And Winner obeyed, but *pilit na pilit*, only three days a week.

I got a copy of the MOA; it did not have any such provision. Neither does it have a provision that it should be closed to the public at any time. What it did have is that it should be turned over to the city government "when its development is completed." That is why Winner is purposely delaying its development, so it won't have to turn over the park to the city government.

Mrs. Paterno blurted out during our phone conversation that they don't want to let go of the park for as long as Mayor Lito Atienza or any of his relatives is in a position of power. That is how much they distrust Atienza. They are afraid Atienza will cut down the trees and construct office buildings in the park as he had repeatedly threatened.

Why don't you come to an agreement with Atienza, sign another MOA, I suggested. You open the park to the public, the city government will provide the policemen to guard it, the gardeners to maintain it, put up lights and park benches and picnic tables, and promise not to cut any trees or build any office building. He can construct the teachers' building in the adjacent lot that he promised to annex to the park and let Winner develop a garden around it. Right now, it is just a junkyard full of unsightly makeshift structures and assorted junk of City Hall.

"Do you think he will follow such a MOA?" Mrs. Paterno asked.

"Why not?" I replied.

But Mrs. Paterno didn't think so. And we can't blame her after what Atienza did to the Jai-Alai building. After he strung along the conservationists and assured them he would not tear down the art deco front of the building, he went ahead and destroyed it, allegedly to give way to a Hall of Justice. But after destroying the building, he left the lot vacant. Until now, no construction of the Hall of Justice has been started.

Then there was the fight over the Mehan Gardens. Environmentalists wanted to preserve it as a garden, a park. The city is running out of open spaces. But the mayor built an ugly parking building on it, in spite of an order from the Department of Environment against it. Now it is accumulating a fine of P50,000 a day. And almost nobody uses it. Big buses still park on Arroceros, under the LRT line, clogging the street.

Then the mayor has threatened to construct his City College on what remains of Mehan Gardens. Can you blame the members of Winner Foundation for distrusting their mayor?

Still, we cannot deny that Atienza has done wonders to revive the grandeur of Manila—at least parts of it, particularly Plaza Miranda, Liwasang Bonifacio and Roxas Boulevard. He has promised to do the same to other parts of Manila.

As for the threatened erection of the City College at Mehan Gardens, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and the Intramuros Administration should share part of the blame. Atienza wanted to put up the College on the old Ateneo campus in Intramuros. The old Walled City used to be under the jurisdiction of the City of Manila but it was transferred to the Intramuros Administration for preservation and restoration. It has not done much toward that end. On the contrary it seems to be hindering its development.

Gordon and the Intramuros Administration did not want to allow Atienza to construct his City College in the Ateneo campus. They said a Spanish company will put up a hotel there. But that company has already given up the idea. Besides, how can a hotel be built there when the law limits the height of buildings within Intramuros to only four stories. Atienza is willing to swap the Mehan Gardens with Ateneo campus. The Department of Tourism can develop Mehan for tourism purposes. But Gordon doesn't even want to discuss the matter with Atienza.

As for Winner, it must not forget that Arroceros Park belongs to the public. It was bought with taxpayers money. It was only loaned to Winner for development. It has done a wonderful job. It's time to let the public enjoy it. How can a private group prevent its owners from entering and enjoying its property?

Time is running out

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

HANS Blix, the UN chief weapons inspector, revealed the results of his search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and as expected raised a storm of controversy with it. In a nutshell, his finding was this: After a fairly exhaustive investigation, one that took visits to more than 400 sites and interviews with hundreds of government officials and private individuals, his team did not find evidence Iraq was harboring weapons of mass destruction. That did not mean those weapons might not exist—several chemical weapons appeared unaccounted for, with only the Iraqi officials' word they had destroyed them. But so far, they had not found any.

Blix praised the response of the Iraqi government, saying they got cooperation all the way. They were given access to all the sites they asked to see and to individuals the scientists they asked to talk to. Except for one instance, the response to their requests was prompt. Indeed, as a result of that cooperation, the UN inspection team managed to grow in size, branching out to include all sorts of auxiliary units. The inspection team, he said, was willing to carry out its duties for as long as it took.

Much of the reaction to the report from the international community was positive, the consensus being to allow the inspection team to continue to do its work. Disarmament, if indeed the weapons existed, was a realistic culmination of these efforts, though it entailed time—South Africa took all of two years to disarm. Certainly, diplomacy remained the only viable future course. War was out of the question.

Predictably, not so for the United States and Great Britain. A day before Blix submitted his report to the UN, Colin Powell spoke before the World Economic Summit beating the drums of war while blowing token rings of smoke from the peace pipe. That is to say, cajoling the world community to hitch on to George Bush's war path while saying that is the last thing Bush wants. Shortly after Blix's report, Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman, held a press conference, and took the same tack. It was a breathtaking exercise in imperial hypocrisy and Catch-22 logic.

America's paramount concern, he said, was the security of Americans at home and abroad. Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction were a real and present threat to that security. Going to war with Iraq to erase that threat wasn't a question of time, it was a question of attitude. That was to say, it wasn't a question of how long the UN inspectors would be allowed to do their job but how long Saddam Hussein would be allowed to thwart it. The weapons of mass destruction were there, and had to be destroyed one way or another. If they could not be found, it was only because Saddam was hiding them.

The point, Fleischer said, was to compel Iraq to cooperate more fully to bring the weapons of mass destruction to the parking lot, where they could be counted and destroyed. But that wasn't likely to happen because the Iraqi government was dedicated to lies, secrecy and deception. Consequently, military pressure or action was necessary and inevitable. At the very least to force Iraq to disarm on its own, at the very most to end the threat by force. "Time," Fleischer said, quoting Bush, "is running out."

Frankly, I don't know why American officials find it the easiest thing in the world to accuse another country of harboring weapons of mass destruction and having a predilection to use them. When the one country that has unbelievable quantities of them and has used them—on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—is the United States. Fleischer—or Bush—complains that Saddam has not cooperated fully with the UN inspectors, which flies in the face of Blix's report. But the United States itself has not lived up to the arms disarmament protocols, and it must be asked what kind of cooperation a UN inspection team could get from Bush if it decided to look into the extent of America's arms buildup and the kinds of weapons of mass destruction it has.

The Iraqi government is given to lies, secrecy and deception? Maybe. But are Washington and the Pentagon any less? Each time they are asked why they are certain Iraq has those weapons, American officials reply that that is what US and British intelligence say. But they cannot reveal more because it would imperil America's future action on Iraq. That is forthrightness, honesty and transparency?

Fleischer says it is not a question of time, it is a question of attitude. That is true, if in quite another sense. For the problem is not just the Iraqi attitude, it is also, and far more so, the American attitude. How can you argue against a position that says: If an inspection team cannot find weapons under your bed, you must be hiding them, which you should stop doing? And the more the inspection team fails to find them, the more you must be thwarting its efforts to find them, and so deserve to have your house razed to the ground? There is never any time or effort that will convince Washington the arms are not there. There is never any level of Iraqi response Washington will regard as full cooperation short of Iraq just admitting the American charges. Which invites razing it to the ground just the same.

The Russian ambassador said it best, "When a country says 'Time is running out,' you have to ask it, 'Why?'" But in another sense, yes, it is true, time is running out—for civilization as we know it. Colin Powell said something that is true too, but not in the sense that he meant it. History, he said, will judge harshly those who stood by and did nothing when they could have stopped an iniquity. We stand by and do nothing to stop America's war on Iraq, and history will judge us harshly.

If indeed there will be any history left to do so.

Not conclusive enough

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE REPORT of the United Nations weapons inspectors to the Security Council on Monday hardened the impasse between the United States and Iraq, and between the United States and its European allies (France, Germany and Russia) opposing Washington's rush to war.

Hans Blix, leader of the inspection teams in the hunt for biological, chemical and missile weapons and programs, reported that after 60 days of search, "Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance...of the disarmament that was demanded of it."

This conclusion was immediately seized upon by the US ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, the former American ambassador to Manila, that Iraq was not disarming in compliance with Security Council Resolution 1441. Negroponte said nothing he heard from the report "gives us hope," and that "they are not cooperating unconditionally."

The most alarming note of Blix's report says that one fresh evidence uncovered by the inspectors which did not appear in Iraq's 12,000 arms declaration submitted to the council, indicates that Iraq has failed to account for some 6,000 chemical rockets. The inspectors cast doubt on whether Iraq has destroyed biological toxins it had reported in 1995. Blix said inspectors have discovered mustard-gas precursor (agents needed to manufacture toxic gas) in recent inspections.

Three questions remain unanswered, according to Blix: (1) How many banned weapons might remain undeclared and intact before the 1991 Gulf war; (2) What was illegally procured or produced; and (3) How to prevent any weapons of mass destruction from being produced or procured in the future.

These findings are likely to be the focus of President George W. Bush's state of the union speech to Congress today, outlining the United States' response to the UN inspectors' report. The focus is on what's missing, and not on what has been found—which is not awfully much. The inspectors have conceded that while Iraq had not been cooperating fully, they have not found the "smoking gun."

The United States is building a case that further inspection is useless and will only lead to a futile exercise of running around in circles. Even before the inspectors' report, Secretary of State Colin Powell warned at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Sunday that time was running out on Iraq in its deceptions and the United States was willing to attack alone if the United States deems that Iraq has not disarmed. "Multilateralism cannot become an excuse for inaction," Powell said. It is precisely American unilateralism that offends the Europeans.

Apparently, US concerns were centered more on the chemical and biological weapons—about which the extent of Iraq's arsenal is not known—than with its nuclear weapons capability.

Mohamed ElBarade, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who also reported to the Security Council on Monday, was more positive on Iraq than Blix. He said, "We have to date, found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear program since the elimination of the program in the 1990s." He called for the extension of the inspection for nuclear weapons, saying "our work is steadily progressing and should be allowed to run its natural course."

Unlike Blix who did not explicitly call for more time, ElBarade said, "We should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons program." Extension is anathema to the United States, because it believes more time—especially months—will only allow Iraq to buy time without disarming.

What was crystallizing among the Security Council members yesterday was that France, Germany, Russia and China were coalescing around giving the inspectors more time, probably running for a few weeks, not months. The Council is meeting again on Feb. 14, at which unanswered questions arising from the inspectors' report will be discussed. This is likely the time frame that will give Iraq a "last chance" to disarm.

The threat of a French veto of a second council resolution authorizing military action on Iraq looms as the rift between the United States and its transatlantic allies, excluding Britain, over giving the inspectors more time, became wider after the inspectors' report. The United States will have none of inspection running for months, as sought by ElBarade. Momentum for war is escalating in the United States and it would be domestically costly for Bush to decelerate the build-up of its military forces in the Gulf after stepping up the tempo of war rhetoric.

Blix said he was not confident about Iraq's compliance with the UN resolution. He contrasted Iraq's behavior with that of South Africa, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, when they abandoned their nuclear programs. Blix lauded the South African model, in which it opened up its facilities to UN inspectors, showed its secret installations and proceeded with dismantling them. By contrast, the inspectors said that Iraq's cooperation was not "pro-active," and it has been pointed out that there were too many Iraqi "minders" hovering around the inspectors wherever they went.

The horrors of germ and chemical warfare appear to have been high up in the minds of the French, Germans, Russians, Chinese and the growing number of protests, including those in the United States, when they block the momentum of the United States' march toward war. The threat of this kind of war was made by US Health Secretary Tommy Thompson. He said at Davos that, "There is going to be an attack. Whether it is in Western Europe, the US, Africa, Asia or wherever, you have got to anticipate that there is going to be a bioterrorism attack and the way to defend yourself is by getting prepared."

If, let's say, the Iraqis in the event of war, attack US troops with biological and chemical weapons, the United States is likely to retaliate with its own biological weapons, killing soldiers as well as civilians. This is the horror that can easily spread globally and that diplomacy is trying to avert.

Counting our votes

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN it was first revealed that the President's "Edsa Dos" anniversary speech would contain what she hoped would be the lasting legacy of her administration, I was keen to find out what it was. When told it would be "computerized elections," I felt a letdown. Somehow, it didn't sound "sexy" enough for this journalist, and I could just imagine how it would underwhelm the rest of the journalistic community.

Sure enough, though the media gave the announcement the requisite attention, "computerized elections" didn't exactly set the news agenda on fire. Maybe it's because computerizing elections seems such a "motherhood" issue. Whoever would be against it? Is there anyone, much less a government official, who would say he or she doesn't believe in automating our electoral system?

Even South Africa, on its first democratic elections after decades of apartheid, put our system to shame by releasing the results of the voting in three-four days. Whereas our system of voting, counting and canvassing, relying on an antiquated system of locked ballot boxes, manual counting and canvassing from precinct, municipal to provincial and then national levels is not only time-consuming (it takes more than a month to release the results for national offices), it's open to fraud at all levels.

The cheating can range from the institutionalized forms such as *"dagdag-bawas"* at the time of canvassing by the mere expedient of "snowpaking" returns, to simple basic steps at the precinct level, such as mis-recording (or even mis-reading) votes in favor of one's candidate. An official even tells of a recently discovered scam: the use of chalk that's been partially slit, so that it records two votes when only one is read.

But given how rotten the system is, why indeed don't we get more excited about computerized elections? Especially now when the highest official of the land has not just expressed her full support for it, but has allocated P2.5 billion to ensure its implementation in the 2004 elections.

* * *

WELL, here's something to get all worked up about. If the Comelec commissioners don't get their act together by the end of the month, which is two days from now, then the computerized counting and canvassing of votes will not happen for the next elections. This is because there are looming deadlines for calling for bids, canvassing, choosing the winning bids, testing the systems, recruiting the technicians to run the systems around the country, printing the special ballots, etc. Should delays occur in any step of the process—and given the history of four commissioners who have resorted to the expedient of absenting themselves so there could be no quorum, that's not so remote—computerized counting and canvassing just will not happen, at least not in 2004.

There is "political will" on the part of at least two Comelec commissioners to speed up the computerization process. But there is the bigger obstacle of what Code-NGO's Dan Songco calls the "political won't" of the four Erap-appointed commissioners and the waffling of late of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos.

How could the fate of our democratic system be held hostage by four or maybe five individuals? Something for Ripley's indeed.

* * *

REPUBLIC Act 8436 calls for the computerization of the counting and canvassing of votes. So far, the Comelec has managed to dodge its responsibility to implement this law by insisting that other steps of the process, aside from counting and canvassing, be funded and implemented first.

Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, who is facing an impeachment charge before the House of Representatives as this is being written, insists on the setting up of an automated voter validation and registration process before computerizing the counting and canvassing. This, despite the Supreme Court ruling setting aside the "VRIS" contract for being overpriced and devoid of legal mandate.

Chairman Abalos, meanwhile, insists automated transmission is also necessary and says a budget of as much as P800 million is needed for this. But Namfrel's Bill Luz points out that one, Namfrel has already offered to do this for the Comelec for free; and two, even if the Comelec were to pay commercial rates to transmit returns from 220,000 precincts to the central headquarters, it would cost them a mere P4 million, tops. "It seems they want to build their own telecommunications company," Luz quipped.

"High Tech Boto," a coalition of civic and community organizations led by Namfrel pushing for computerized counting and canvassing, says in a statement that the P2.5 million that the President released should be used for this purpose, "First, because it is consistent with RA 8436. Second, because it is what is feasible within the remaining 15 months prior to elections, and more importantly will not require additional funding beyond what has already been allocated."

* * *

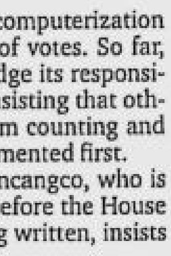
GUS Lagman, who has provided technical advice to the Comelec on computerized counting and canvassing, admits that "going high tech" will not solve all problems related to elections, "but a big part will be solved."

And it's the most important part, I might add.

Once we're sure our votes are at least counted and recorded properly, with little room for human intervention, we can then move on to solve other problems, not just padded voter lists and slow transmission, but also voters' values and their vulnerability to bribery, violence and celebrity in choosing our leaders.

Indeed, the sickness in our system goes much deeper than just fraud-ridden counting. But counting our votes right is a good place to begin basic reforms.

Cultural oasis



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

MY explorations in and around Manila go all the way back to the sixth grade. Air-conditioned buses were new and christened by Imelda Marcos as the "Love Bus." For P2.50 flat-rate these blue buses, with multi-colored hearts painted over them, would take me from Cubao or Makati to the Escolta terminal where I would travel on foot or *kalesa* to Quiapo, Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Tondo, San Miguel and the University belt. In the 19th-century, they were known as *arrabales* or suburbs of Manila then the medieval city enclosed by the walls of Intramuros. I thought I knew Manila then but it was late in life that I learned to look at the city as I would a painting or a novel. It is ironic that this important lesson came from Pedro Ortiz Armengol then Spanish ambassador to the Philippines.

We went to Binondo one Saturday morning and, armed with an 1872 map of Manila and a copy of Rizal's Noli, literally followed the characters as they moved in the novel to get a glimpse of Rizal's Manila. Our first stop was the State investment building where the original Kapitan Tiago house once stood. Then, we crossed the polluted estero fronting Binondo church turned left towards the fire station and looked at the site of the former Fonda de Lala Ary also in the novel. We followed Ibarra as he walked behind Binondo church guided by the text and comparing it with the sights, sounds and smells of the 1980's. Don Pedro pointed to the 1872 map saying, "the look of a city may change, but the outline of its streets, its rivers, canals and other topographical details remain." I have never looked at Manila the same way since. Old buildings and historic sites are seen as they are, but I try to imagine what they were like in the past.

What appear to most as useless dilapidated structures thus acquire historical context and move us to heritage preservation. This way of seeing does not translate into cash, but it does enrich us in a different and intangible way.

"Why is it," Anding Roces once asked me, "that when we speak of Manila, we speak of it in the past tense?" While I would have readily agreed I remembered Far Eastern University that celebrated its 75th anniversary yesterday. FEU is known primarily for its accounting graduates and its formidable basketball team obscuring the fact that it is a cultural treasure hidden in the university belt. Its gems I think are so much a part of the everyday life of FEU students that they see but do not notice. For example, many of us who travel from Manila to Quezon City often miss the Nicanor Reyes Building whose art-deco façade by Pablo Antonio, National Artist for Architecture, is a fleeting sight for those who descend the underpass on Quezon boulevard. Even the font on the building that identifies it as FEU is often overlooked which is a pity because its letters are patterned after the pre-colonial Philippine script or *baybayin*. The same font used by the nationalist pre-war periodicals El Renacimiento and Renacimiento Flipino.

Inside the campus, where I once taught a graduate course on the Philippine Revolution, I found trees, greenery and open space in the University belt that is now a concrete jungle with different types of predatory beasts. What floored me was that precious works of art were everywhere, not part of a stuffy museum display, but an integral part of the university. When you ask a fish to describe its surroundings the last thing it will describe is the water. Thus many students who go into the FEU chapel to pray do not realize that the Stations of the Cross are by Carlos V. Francisco, National Artist for painting, so when I went inside to gawk at the paintings, devout students looked annoyed at my heathen tourist ways. These stations in the signature pale hues reminiscent of *komiks* do not inspire me to awe or prayer as much as another Francisco painting that hangs in the third floor of the administration building depicting a fluvial procession in honor of San Clemente in Angono that is more typical of the master's work.

Then there are a number of small oil portraits by Fernando Amorsolo that were meant to inspire the youth: Apolinario Mabini, Andres Bonifacio, Gregorio del Pilar, Emilio Jacinto, and Jose Rizal. All these men made their mark in Philippine history when they were in their 20s and 30s. Nobody was over 40 stressing the call for the youth to push the country forward. An art deco mural by Antonio Dumlao says the same thing—youth, education and development. Four art deco relief by Francesco Monti also draw on history each drawing the influence of Chinese, Spanish and American influences that shaped the modern Philippines. Two rare sculptures by Graciano Nepomuceno depict characters from the Noli, one is Filosofo Tasio, the other Elias battling the crocodile.

At the center of the campus is a group of copper sculptures by Vicente Manansala, National Artist for painting, that embodies the vision of the founding president Nicanor Reyes. He said that FEU was "dedicated not only to impart knowledge and skills in various professions but also to inculcate in the minds of our youth the love of Fatherland and God." It is good to know that deep in the university belt lies a cultural oasis from which young people may drink, dream and develop.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Paradise in Coron

HIGH BLOOD

Rebecca D. Fernandez

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed.**

I STOOD on the porch of a friend's house which stands on a mountainside overlooking the beautiful, tranquil Lake Lucerne in Switzerland, and I said "Oh, you live in paradise!" I was overwhelmed by the loveliness all around me—mountains and meadows, quaint Swiss hotels and houses in neat rows down the slopes from where we stood, and the incredibly beautiful Lake Lucerne. I could see villages all around the lake, ferry boats chugging from port to port, little sailboats sailing on the tranquil waters. I looked at the houses and saw a profusion of colors in window boxes and in pocket gardens.

"Oh Mrs. Fernandez, this is paradise! This is really very beautiful!" I gave my guest an incredulous look. "What?" "This is so beautiful, this is paradise!" Huh? What is he talking about? Is he talking of a Greek island or Capri or Lucerne? Or of a village on the banks of the Rhine River? "You are lucky to live in Coron. It is so beautiful!"

I have traveled far and wide, seen so many lovely places in Seattle, San Francisco, Maryland, Florida. I have stood in awe at the Alps, crossed the forests of the Pyrenees into the beautiful Basque villages in the France-Spanish border, walked the "beautiful" beaches of Biarritz and St. Jean d'Luz. I have watched the Atlantic beat against the shores of Oporto in Portugal, cruised the majestic fjords of Norway and thrilled at the sight of massive roaring cascades which Norway has a great abundance of, crossed the lovely hills of Salzburg where in my mind whirled the melodious voice of Julie Andrews in the "Sound of Music," visited the majestic Mt. Fuji, forever cloaked in mist and mystery, walked the sands of the deserts of Egypt and sailed the waters of the Nile. I have viewed the Isle of Capri across the Tyrrhenian Sea from a cozy café on a cliff in Sorrento; caught the splendor of the sunset over a snow-capped mountain as I sat in a train from the ancient town of Segovia in Spain and cruised the famous and mythical islands of Greece—all these in search of the beautiful, of the soul-stirring, of the best that Nature could give. So many times, touched by the exquisite loveliness or the majestic splendor or sheer tranquillity of a place, I raised my face to God and gave thanks for this wonderful world that He had created.

And suddenly this guest in my little lodge in Coron says of my far-flung little island, "This is paradise!" Huh? That can only be said of Lucerne, of the Pyrenees, of the Black Forest with its massive pines and quaint villages, or the very scenic Isle of Man in the British Isles, or of a picturesque village in Sweden, or of a Hawaiian Island! And yet, this guest was raving about Coron, that island town in Palawan, and so have many others although not as exuberantly as this one guest. I am a true Coronian. I grew up there, and have very wonderful memories of childhood there. But how come I never thought of it as beautiful?

I started to look, and look hard I did. I stood on the wooden bridge by the town marketplace and looked across the bay at Calis Island, the huge limestone island so admired by visitors. I took a motorboat and cruised around the island, discovering its inlets and coves, its pockets of white beaches; admired with awe the cliffs falling into the sea, cliffs so exquisitely sculpted by millennia of wind and waves. I looked down the shallow clear waters and saw corals swaying in the water and little tropical fishes darting among them. I climbed the cliffs on which, thankfully, the municipal government had cut a stairway, to reach Cayangan Lake. From the top I looked back to see a spectacular panoramic view of the sea and the cathedral-like formations of the cliffs and mountains. And down in front of me was Cayangan Lake—tranquil, dark, untouched, enchanting, fascinating.

I went up the road that saddles part of the slope of Mt. Tapias, the mountain that overlooks the town and which is a favorite of local would-be mountain climbers. Why, the view was breathtaking! I then recalled the only time I reached the top of the mountain—as an 11-year-old Girl Scout, I had conquered the mountain and enjoyed the 360-degree panoramic view of the town of Coron and the surrounding areas and islands.

I started comparing Cayangan with Lake Lucerne. Cayangan with its magnificent cliffs and crags can hold its own in comparison with any lake of its size around the world.

I spent a night with my family in North Key, a small island of Busuanga, the big island on which Coron is located. I enjoyed the beach of broken corals that we raked with our fingers in search of little souvenir shells or pebbles, joining a contest with the children as to who could find the nicest little souvenir. I walked alone to the western side of the island and caught the splendor of the sunset. Why, it was the most glorious, exquisite, soul-stirring experience in my life! I waited for twilight, that two or three minutes in time when darkness blends with what little is left of light. It was so serene, so touching, so incredibly beautiful, I could have stood there forever. The dark thin reef seemed to extend to eternity and the horizon had just a peep of light to mark where the magnificent sun had gone down. The ripple on the quiet waters formed phosphorescent little stars like so many fireflies flickering on a moonless night. All was quiet except for the soft sound of the ripples hitting the shore.

We proceeded to Malagum Island, a dark, almost black (*malagum!*) hunk of another nature-sculpted island almost out into the China Sea. A pocket of white beach glistened in the sun and, as we approached, we could see the dark mouth of a cave right behind the beach. In the evening, this mouth expels thousands of bats that darken the sky. As the flying creatures cross the last rays of the setting sun, one sees a painting so beautiful, no Van Gogh or Monet or Renoir could match the canvass the Creator Himself has painted across the evening sky.

My guest was right. While I had always been very excited with the beauty of far-flung places that I visited, I never appreciated the beauty of what was in my face each day. It took a stranger to open my eyes to what a beautiful island I live in. I was like the boy in "The Alchemist" who traveled far and wide, crossed the desert to the Pyramids, only to find out that the treasure he sought was right where he started. Like the boy, I have found my treasure and that treasure had always been there for me—my home place, Coron.

Rebecca D. Fernandez is 64 years old. She goes to Coron once every two months to check on her old house which she has turned into a lodge, and to visit friends.

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PPI

Suffering the VAT

THE VALUE-ADDED tax is theoretically a pass-on tax. But professionals like doctors on whom VAT will be imposed are sounding rather grandiloquent and quite hypocritical in their profuse defense, to the effect that it is their poor patients who will ultimately be shouldering the tax. If they are honestly worried about their patients' welfare, doctors can always choose to shoulder the tax themselves for a start. Or they could adjust their fees so the bite won't be too much compared to the burden that salaried workers like me have had to endure all these years.

The same way with artists. How can I possibly sympathize with their pleas and claims that they are already heavily taxed at the 20 percent they currently pay? I pay more than that on my measly salary, but I can still get by.

These people just can't get it through their heads that we all should pull a fair share of the load to keep the government running.

So they say it's the consumers who will eventually bear the burden of VAT. Partly true, I suppose. But doesn't the rule of economics dictate that the price charged to the consumer is more than simply adding on the tax? Movies, shows and other forms of entertainment are not exactly "essential" products that can move prices in the same way basic goods and services would.

We complain when electricity rates increase, but we still consume electricity because it's a necessity. Movie tickets, however, we can afford to let go.

So they cannot simply "pass" the burden to consumers without suffering the consequences of declined sales proceeds. If they really want to "save" the industry, big-time artists should have no choice but to absorb the tax. After all, they do negotiate their talent fees, don't they? Again, their so-called crusade of saving us end-users is a ploy to divert attention from their selfish intent.

Professionals are not really paying the entire 10 percent. They will be encouraged to save VAT receipts for payment of goods and services they use in their profession since these in turn will serve as their "input" VAT that can be deducted from the 10 percent. The beauty of this tax measure lies in the incentives given to those who declare the "VAT-able" expenses since the VAT portion of the payment is deductible. At the same time, the payment should be traced to the professional who rendered the service and cannot avoid non-declaration of this income without being detected by authorities of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

It all boils down to what concerns the professionals most: allow themselves to suffer, let other people suffer, or let the entire nation suffer. It's their choice.

—M. M. SARMIENTO,
piansarmiento2002@yahoo.com

Real citizenship is more than Edsa

I WAS an Edsa participant in 1986 and I am proud to have done my part and committed myself as a citizen. I was a government employee then and I had to disguise myself many times to avoid being recognized. My husband was more fired up than I because he was a student activist. My two sons tagged along wearing yellow shirts, pins and caps.

We went to the rally every day till it ended. We experienced the heat, the hunger, the fear. But all that could not compare to the feeling of wanting to be free. It was a good feeling.

The second time around was the same for me, my husband and my two sons. My husband, sister and I were together while my sons went with friends and school groups. But we regularly attended the rally there till the deposed President was removed from office. What I remember are the colors yellow and black, the song "Bayan Ko," the feeling of fear, anxiety, unity of purpose, the emotion-filled moments, the chanting in unison, the Masses, the prayer, the people. It was an experience like no other. It was sharing food, drinks and love for one's country.

We can't let our country down, now most especially. The noise of divisiveness is getting louder. Corruption and scandals paint a bad image of our country. Communists, separatists and extremists continue to hound our democracy. Crimes proliferate. Yes, we are all facing more challenges in the fight for survival of our nation. Let there be no more Edsa. Let us love our country first. We cannot do something positive if we do not start by loving our country. Edsa I and II were successful because at that point in time, the fire in our hearts kept burning, the intensity of wanting to preserve our freedom was so great.

It is not enough to rekindle the fire of Edsa. It is not a three- or four-day commitment. It is a daily commitment. It is a daily commitment if we want our nation to survive and pass through many crucial tests.

Edsa is etched in our hearts, marked in our calendars. But we all should live it.

—NELEH B. OKINOD,
XavierVille Subdivision,
Loyola Heights, Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Waste of much needed drugs

WE are bothered by the news reported in the Jan. 14 issue of the INQUIRER that over P360,000 worth of medicines against tuberculosis (TB), malaria and asthma as well as antibiotics were found buried at the back of the Bukidnon Provincial Health Office building. The bulk of the medicines were reportedly donated by the Italian government and arrived a few months before their expiry dates in 1996 and 1997.

It is the common experience of our community-based health programs in the Council for Health and Development that generating resources to buy medicines for TB patients is not easy. The usual complaint of people is that barangay health centers lack supplies and medicines. An oversupply of much needed medicines in certain localities (such as what the Bukidnon hospital claimed) clearly calls for a redistribution of allotments to other needy localities.

The resurgence of TB as one of the leading causes of death in the Philippines is quite alarming. If the medicines that were allowed to expire had been given to those in need, some 240 TB patients could have been treated. The fact that the Bukidnon Provincial Health Office was given recognition by the Center for Health and Development in Northern Mindanao for outstanding implementation of the National Tuberculosis Program for 2001-2002 only added insult to injury.

—DR. ELEANOR A. JARA,
executive director,
Council for Health
and Development, Rm. 16,
72-A Times St. West Triangle
Homes, Quezon City

The answer is not in a new Constitution

HISTORY has shown that a new Constitution will not provide roofs over our heads, food on the table and hope for the future, unless the entire citizenry changes for the better. It is society itself that breathes life into the Constitution.

A new Constitution that advocates better governance shall remain a dream unless mediocrity is banished. Truth is, even after a constitutional convention shall have written a new Constitution, corruption will still be rampant, politics will continue to stunt economic growth, Congress will still be manned by actors, basketball players and comedians, and our people will continue to mock the future of the republic by continually electing public officials based on popularity and mass appeal.

—ROBERTO "BUTCH" SERRANO
JR., Better Living Subd.,
Parañaque, City

Disappointed with Satur's words

THE STATEMENTS made by Satur Ocampo in the INQUIRER on Jan. 26 have only proven one thing: he is a spineless and shameless stooge of Jose Maria Sison. By mouthing Joma's line of slandering the RPA-ABB, he has lost his self-respect and is virtually losing whatever sympathy we had for him.

Even his colleagues in Congress would cringe at his irresponsible and baseless pronouncements, leaving him dumbfounded after Gregorio Rosal admitted the killing of Rolly Kintanar.

Before, it was unimaginable for Satur to reduce peace talks to capitulation and surrender and loss of political freedom as he projected himself as a reasonable and responsible peace advocate. But it is now clear that he is only echoing the lines pushed by the CPP-NPA-NDF.

—NILO DELA CRUZ,
chief negotiator,
RPM-P/RPA-ABB,
Rebolusyonaryong Partido
ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas

DILG clarifies charges to be filed against Joma

THIS is to clarify the news item titled "Joma faces raps over Aguinaldo killing" last Jan. 26.

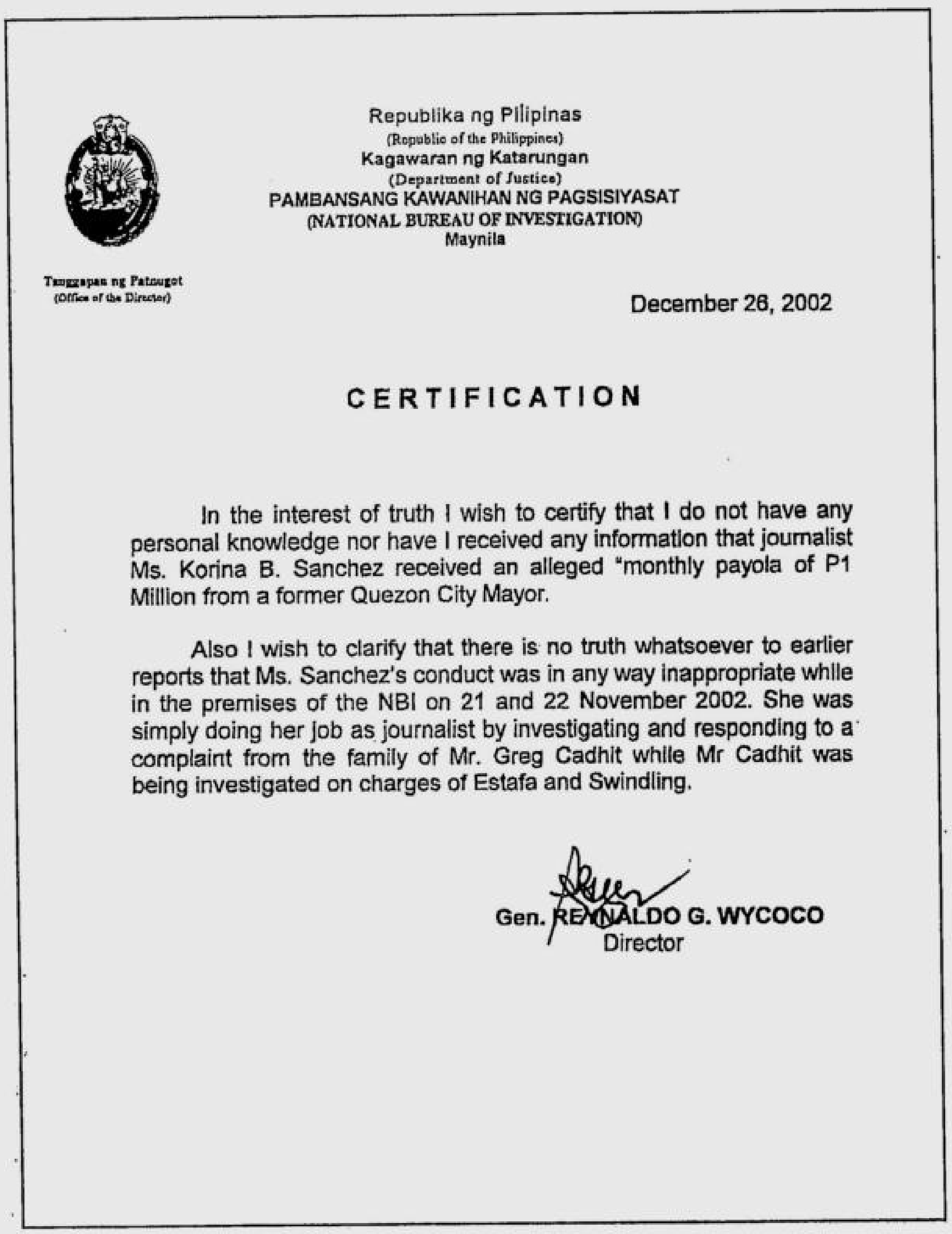
In the third paragraph of the news article, it was stated that we have found probable cause that Jose Ma. Sison was involved in the killing of Rep. Rodolfo Aguinaldo in Cagayan, and Supt. Cesar Santander and PO1 Nestor Santiago of the Lopez, Quezon Police, and that the justice department had recommended the filing of charges against the communist leader during a Cabinet oversight committee meeting last week.

Perhaps, there is a need to explain fully that statement. What I meant was that the Philippine National Police has already built a case against Sison with regard to the said killings, and this was reported to the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security. Hence, our decision to file criminal charges against Sison with the concerned prosecutor's office.

I hope I have clarified and corrected the issue.

—JOSE D. LINA,
secretary,
Department of Interior
and Local Government,
A. Francisco Gold
Condominium II,
Edsa cor. Mapagmahal Street,
Diliman, Quezon City

WYCOCO RESPONDS



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PAMBANSANG KAWANIHAN NG PAGSISIYASAT
(NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION)
Maynila

Tanggapan ng Patnugot
(Office of the Director)

December 26, 2002

CERTIFICATION

In the interest of truth I wish to certify that I do not have any personal knowledge nor have I received any information that journalist Ms. Korina B. Sanchez received an alleged "monthly payola of P1 Million from a former Quezon City Mayor.

Also I wish to clarify that there is no truth whatsoever to earlier reports that Ms. Sanchez's conduct was in any way inappropriate while in the premises of the NBI on 21 and 22 November 2002. She was simply doing her job as journalist by investigating and responding to a complaint from the family of Mr. Greg Cadhit while Mr Cadhit was being investigated on charges of Estafa and Swindling.

Gen. REYNALDO G. WYCOCO
Director

- ***21 NOVEMBER 2002***

  Mr. George Cadhit was invited for questioning and arbitrarily detained by the NBI.

- ***22 NOVEMBER 2002***

  Journalist Korina Sanchez went to the NBI at around 2:00 a.m. responding to a complaint from Cadhit's family.

- ***25 NOVEMBER 2002***

  In the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) news article entitled, "***War: NBI vs Korina,***" PDI reporter Philip Tubeza reported that "One agent said that the bureau has not even detailed Sanchez's supposed one-million-peso payola during the time of a former Quezon City mayor."

- ***15 DECEMBER 2002***

  Mr. & Mrs. Ramon and Celia Sanchez, parents of Ms. Korina Sanchez, took a one page ad in the PDI to present signed denials of former Quezon City Mayors Brigido Simon and Ismael Mathay, Jr. on the supposed payola.

- ***26 DECEMBER 2002***

  NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco issued a letter stating that he did not have any personal knowledge nor have received any information that Ms. Korina Sanchez received an alleged "monthly payola of P 1 Million from a former Quezon City Mayor", and that her conduct while inside the premises of the NBI was inappropriate.

AD PAID FOR BY MR. & MRS. RAMON & CELIA SANCHEZ

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Asian leaders slam unyielding Iraq

SINGAPORE—Asian countries Tuesday criticized Iraq for not cooperating enough with UN weapons inspectors but most governments fearful of a looming war cautioned the United States against acting alone against Baghdad.

The strongest support for Washington came from Australia where Prime Minister John Howard said Iraq was in "material breach" of UN Security Council resolutions. If Baghdad is not disarmed, he warned, it could start exporting weapons of mass destruction to terrorists.

"Although Iraq may have cooperated in a process sense, in substance Iraq has not cooperated," Howard told Sydney radio station 2GB.

Australia is one of only three nations—along with the United States and Britain—which has sent troops to the Persian Gulf region in preparation for possible war with Iraq.

UN weapons inspectors told the Security Council Monday that Iraq had failed to fully cooperate with them over 60 days of inspection and said they need least a "few months" to give the process time to avert a war.

Most Asian nations agreed and called on Washington to be patient, including Howard who said Iraq should have "some more time, but not a lot" to disclose its alleged weapons of mass destruction.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said Iraq had "very little time" to convince the Security Council that it is cooperating fully, with the United States already signaling "some movement (to war) around the end of February (or) some time (in) March."

"I think now a war in Iraq is far more likely than not, but . . . there's still the opportunity for Iraq to be much more fulsome and ward that off," she said.

China, Asia's only permanent member of the security council, had no immediate comment on the weapons report.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said Iraq has used chemical weapons in the past and must convince the world that it does not pose a threat.

"Iraq carries the burden of proof but it has not provided a proactive explanation," she said. "Iraq needs to respond more proactively."

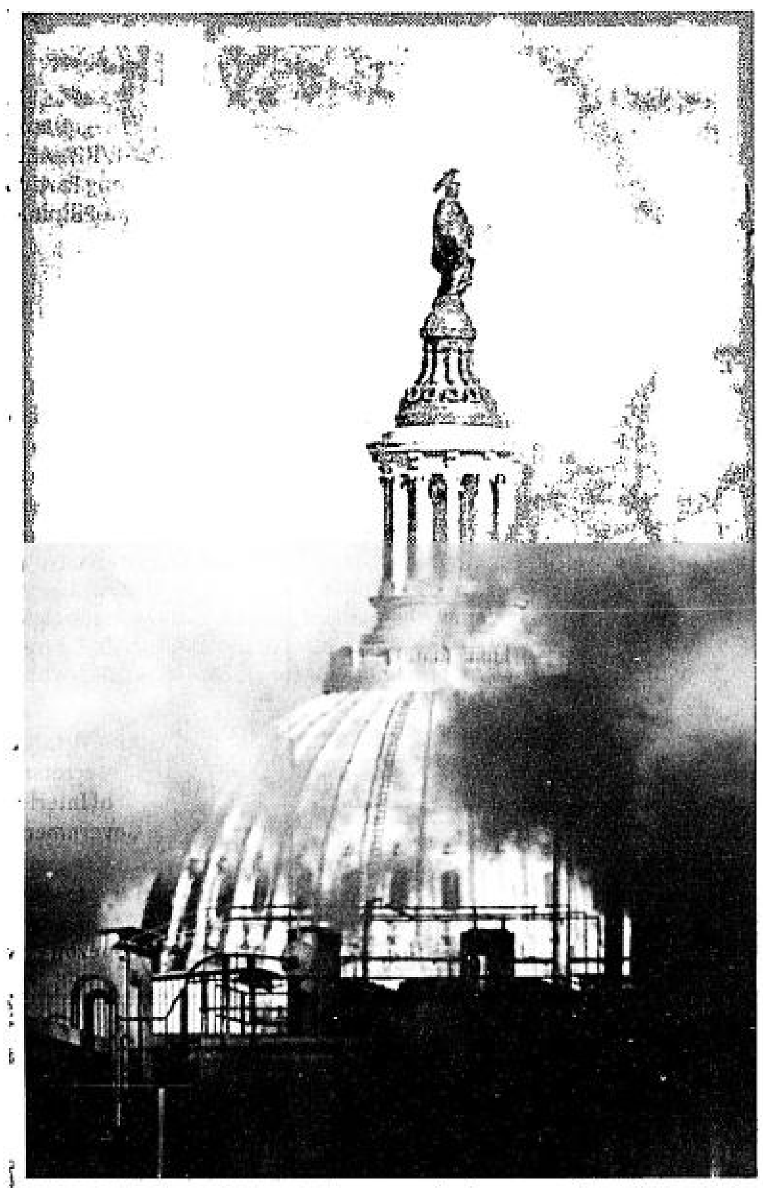
Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Marty Natalegawa warned the United States and its allies not to use the report as grounds for an attack against Iraq.

"We feel the UN inspection team must be allowed to finish its work," Natalegawa said. "We hope this will be the case and there won't be any unilateral steps beyond the confines of the UN system."

Singapore maintained any action against Iraq should be decided by the Security Council after considering the inspectors' report.

"It is up to the Security Council to assess and consider what further actions it needs to take," Singapore's Foreign Ministry said in a brief statement.

India's foreign ministry said it would release a statement on the report late Tuesday. *AP*



THE DOME of the US Capitol is surrounded by steam from the Capitol Power Plant while temperatures hover around 5 to zero degrees Celsius Jan. 27 in South East Washington, DC. President Bush will deliver his State of the Union Address from the US Capitol late Jan. 28. AFP

Bush's 'State' to brace Americans for Iraq war

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush girded Monday for a critical "State of the Union" speech aimed at bracing Americans for possible war with Iraq and soothing mounting worries about the struggling economy.

Viewers tuning into the 9:01 p.m. Tuesday address "won't hear a deadline, they won't hear a declaration of war" against Baghdad, Bush spokesperson Ari Fleischer said of the roughly 45-minute speech.

Other aides cautioned against expecting any startling revelations about Iraq's alleged chemical, biological or nuclear weapons programs, which Bush has resolved to end by force if Baghdad will not disarm voluntarily.

Instead, Bush will broadly spell out the threat Iraq poses to US interests, explain why he has dispatched some 150,000 US troops to the Gulf, insist that he does not want war, but assert that Baghdad is running out of time to disarm.

The President will leave it to US Secretary of State Colin Powell to build the US case that Iraq has ties to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, the group behind the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"The information that we can divulge in greater detail, we will be divulging in the days ahead," Powell told reporters.

Opinion polls have found that many Americans side with key US allies in wanting UN disarmament inspectors to have more time to do their job and are expressing growing concerns about Bush's handling of the US economy.

Though still popular, Bush has slipped in some surveys to his lowest job approval ratings since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks—something that could complicate his all-but certain bid for a second term come 2004.

The US leader will push his $670-billion economic recovery package, which faces stiff resistance from opposition Democrats in a US Congress where Bush's Republicans enjoy thin majorities.

"Today what we are getting from the White House are confused signals instead of clear direction, slogans instead of solutions, posturing instead of progress. There's a name for all of this: It's called a credibility gap," Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle said in a speech Monday.

Bush aides have acknowledged that viewers worldwide will listen closely to his remarks on Iraq, but they have gone out of their way to emphasize the domestic components of the address.

"Most of the State of the Union will not be about Iraq. Most of the State of the Union will be about improving America's economy and providing greater access to health care for millions of American people," said Fleischer. *AFP*

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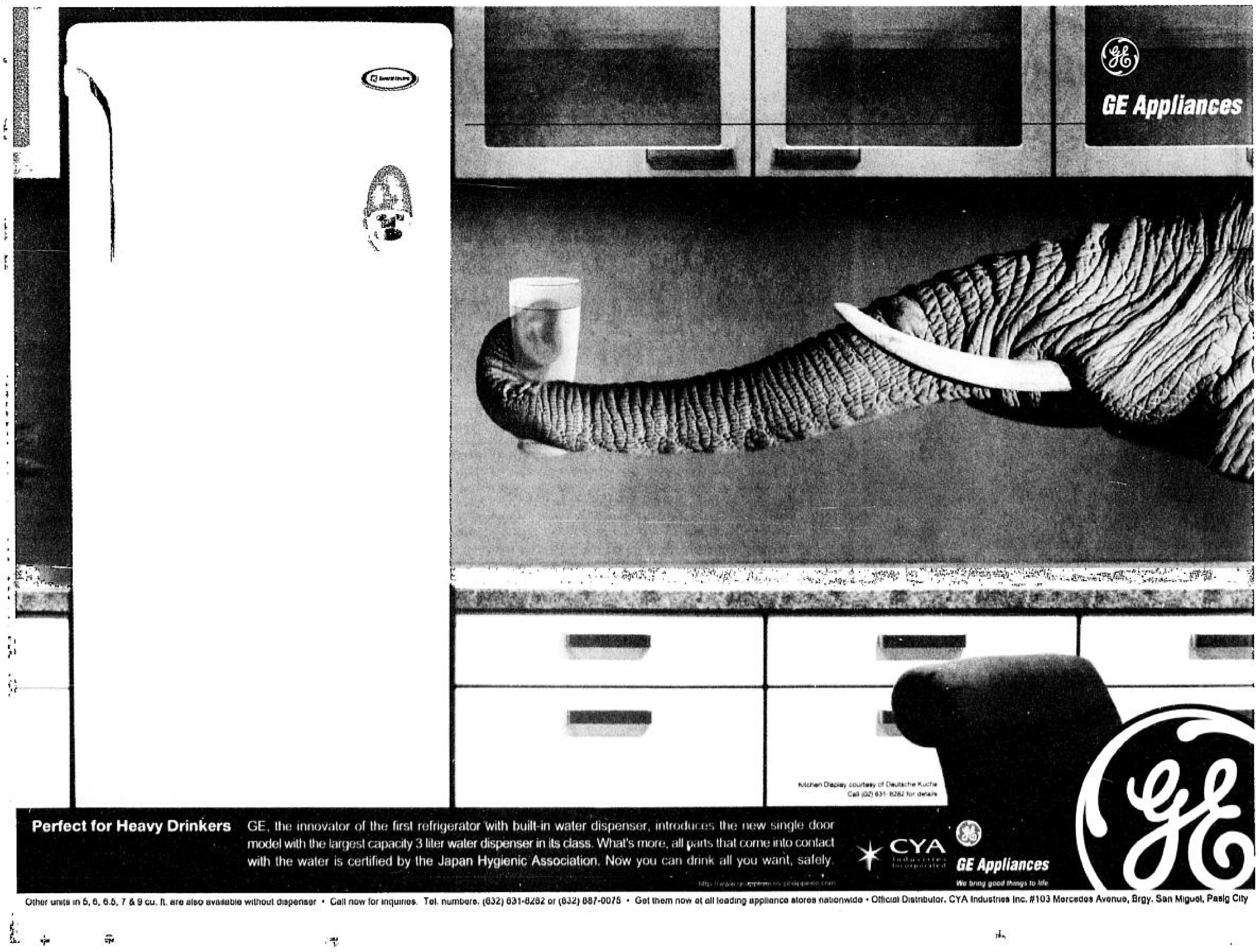

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World Social Forum says 'no' to war, free trade

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil—Thousands of activists marched Monday against possible war in Iraq and the planned Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), closing the World Social Forum with an anti-globalization bang.

Police said some 20,000 marchers waved banners, chanting "No to an attack on Iraq" at the end of the forum gathering which has emerged as the counterweight to the market-minded World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

One enormous banner cried "against the FTAA and war," referring to opposition to potential US-led action against Iraq, and the free trade area that is due to stretch from Canada down to Chile, with the enormous US economy as its center of gravity. Opponents argue the United States is only looking out for its interests with the deal; supporters insist it will boost exports.

"Our struggle is every day; we are women, not merchandise," groups of marchers at the rally chanted.

A myriad of anti-war demonstrations and conferences was organized to coincide with the delivery to the UN Security Council of a key report on work by weapons inspectors checking on Iraq's compliance with disarmament orders.

"If the United Nations wants to have a role in the future, it cannot support the United States in war," said European Social Forum representative, Vittorio Agnoletto.

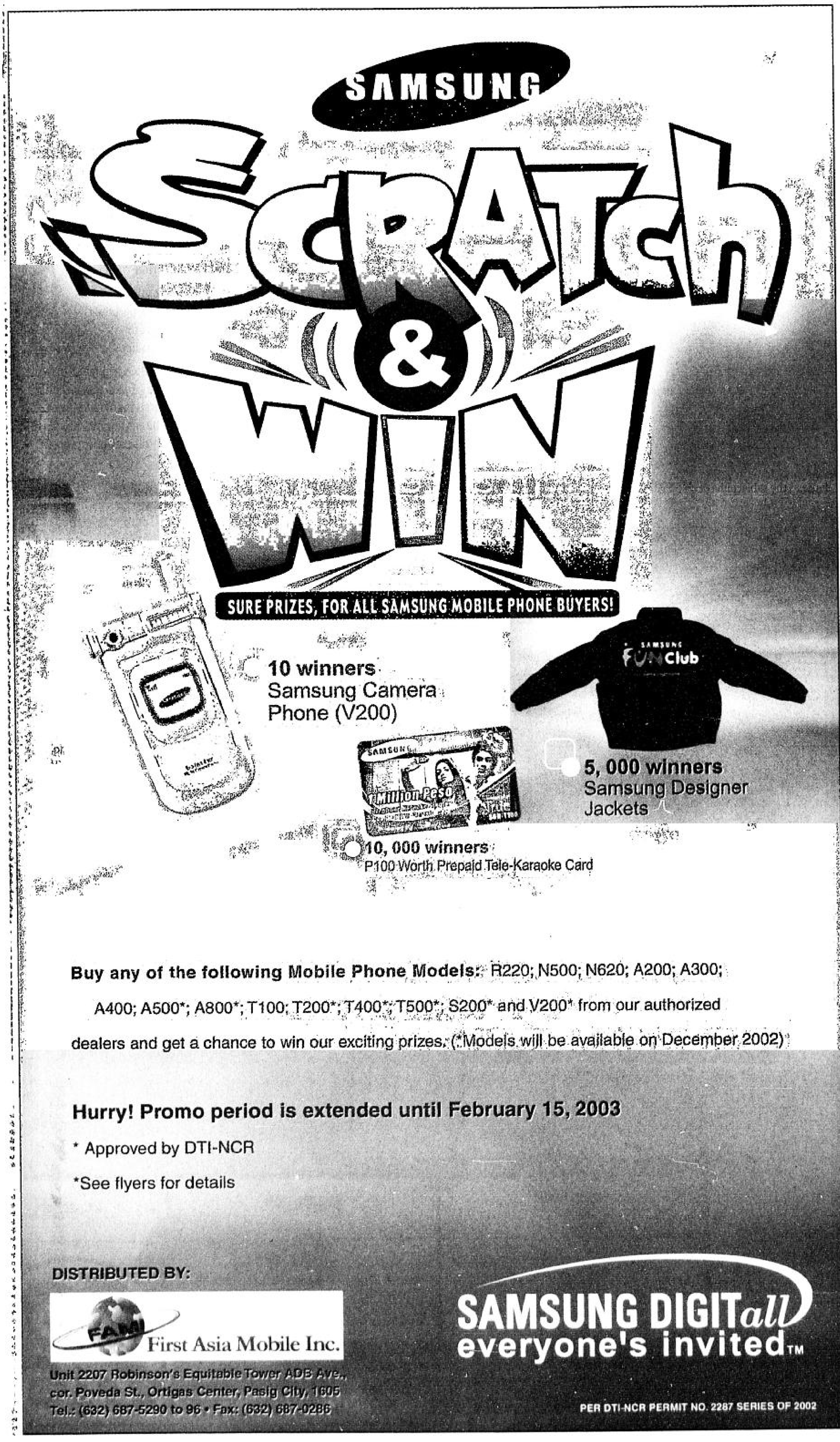
"I believe the UN must hear the voice of the world's citizens who don't want war," he said.

"The only motive for war is the control of oil, and that links Iraq and Venezuela," said the Italian activist, in reference to general-strike hit Venezuela.

Radical social movements invited civil society to join them in their "call" against war and military buildup, set out in a statement from international peasants' movement Via Campesina, social movements from India, and from France's Committee to Annul Third World Debt. *AFP*

MEMBERS of Brazilian Landless Rural Workers take part in the closing march during the III World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Jan. 27.

AFP



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S. Korea envoy to meet North's Kim on crisis

SEOUL—A special envoy from South Korea was to meet the North's enigmatic leader, Kim Jong-il, on Tuesday to try to resolve a nuclear crisis, as diplomats from around the world voiced willingness to help ensure peace on the peninsula.

On his second day in the North's capital, Pyongyang, special envoy Lim Dong-won was to meet Kim Jong-il to hand over to him a letter from the South's outgoing president, Kim Dae-jung, local media said. The meeting was expected late in the day.

The North's willingness to receive an envoy from the South to discuss the crisis was evidence of a marked shift by Pyongyang to use go-betweens to resolve the impasse that it insists can only be broken by direct talks with the United States.

Between demands for talks, Pyongyang maintained its drumroll of bellicose statements in what has become the most serious crisis on the Korean peninsula since the North came close to war with the United States over its nuclear ambitions during the presidency of Bill Clinton in 1994.

Seoul said Lim's first day of meetings proceeded in a serious atmosphere. Pyongyang was effusive, describing the talks as "overflowing with compatriotic feelings and mutual understanding." The crisis was sparked in October when the United States, which has bracketed the North with Iraq and Iran as part of an "axis of evil," said it had admitted developing nuclear arms.

Pyongyang later ejected UN nuclear inspectors, removed seals from a mothballed reactor and pulled out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Russia earlier this month sent an envoy to Pyongyang where he held six hours of talks with the reclusive Kim Jong-il.

Joining the rush to ensure peace, the European Union said on Monday it was willing to send a high-level mission to help end North Korea's nuclear standoff with the international community.

"We have got a mandate to become more involved. There will be a mission, if necessary, to Pyongyang at some point," Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou said after a meeting of the 15 EU foreign ministers. *Reuters*

Australian fireman charged with arson

CANBERRA, Australia—As thousands of firefighters worked frantically Tuesday to protect towns in southeast Australia from wild fires, one of their colleagues appeared in court charged with arson.

John Christopher Andersen, 18, a volunteer firefighter from Victoria state appeared in a Magistrates Court on 14 charges of lighting 12 fires over the past six weeks in forest just 40 km north of the state capital Melbourne.

Andersen, who was arrested close to a fire on Monday, was not required to enter a plea and will remain in custody until his next Melbourne court appearance on Apr. 12.

One of the fires he allegedly lit razed about 30 ha of state forest of Mount Disappointment, but did not threaten homes or property.

However, just 200 km away in northeast Victoria and southern New South Wales, thousands of residents were under threat ahead of searing temperatures and high winds forecast for Wednesday. Authorities fear blistering weather will whip three-week-old bush fires into raging infernos.

"We have a window of 24 hours to get things done," said John Winter, a spokesperson for the New South Wales Rural Fire Service. "Conditions will be a lot worse tomorrow and very difficult on Thursday."

About 5,000 firefighters and emergency services staff have been working nonstop since Sunday night bulldozing fire breaks ahead of the blazes and deliberately starting smaller fires to create lines of scorched earth that will not burn again, a practice known as backburning. *AP*

Students cheat with vibrating underwear

BANGKOK—Fifty-eight college students were arrested for allegedly hiding pagers in their underwear to cheat on an examination, police said Tuesday.

Police said the pagers were set to vibrate with answers to multiple-choice questions.

One vibration meant the first choice was correct, two vibrations meant the second choice and so on, police Capt. Komsan Paksin said Tuesday.

Four teachers were also arrested and accused of helping the 35 female and 23 male students.

The arrests were made on Monday at Ramkhamheang University in Bangkok where undergraduate students were taking a final English examination for a bachelor's degree, Komsan said. *AP*

RESCUERS look for survivors after an explosion ripped through a house belonging to a member of Hamas on the outskirts of Gaza City Jan. 28, killing three people.
REUTERS

Israel closes all Palestinian territories on eve of election

JERUSALEM—Israel imposed a total closure on the Palestinian territories on the eve of elections Monday, in which hardline Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is due to emerge the overall winner.

Meanwhile tensions were high in the Gaza Strip after more Palestinian rocket attacks, and as Israel said it could reoccupy the coastal territory as it has done most of the West Bank for the past seven months.

The army shut all borders between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip Sunday evening, as well as key border crossings it controls between the territories and Jordan and Egypt, until Wednesday morning, the day after the elections.

Palestinian militants killed six Israelis at a polling booth during leadership elections for Sharon's Likud party in November.

Tensions rose sharply over the weekend after Gaza-based militants fired home-made rockets over the border into southern Israel, injuring one man and provoking a devastating Israeli raid into the heart of Gaza City, the deepest incursion into the densely-populated metropolis in more than two years of fighting.

Twelve Palestinians were killed and more than 60 injured in heated fighting, but militants from the radical Islamic group Hamas fired four more missiles at the Israeli town of Sderot in defiance after the army withdrew.

Palestinians accused Sharon of launching the massive raid as a means of boosting his tough image before Tuesday's general elections, which he is tipped to win on a pledge to smash the intifada, or uprising, and not engage in peace talks until the Palestinians down their weapons. *AFP*

Internet recovers from worm attack

SEATTLE/LONDON—The two-day-old computer worm that wreaked havoc on the Internet over the weekend was finally losing steam on Monday as companies scrambled to secure their networks, while computer security experts warned more dangerous spin-offs might emerge in the next few days.

Authorities were probing the "SQL Slammer" bug, the most damaging Web attack in 18 months, which nearly shut down web access in South Korea, brought many US automatic teller machines to a standstill and paralyzed corporate networks.

"Right now I would say the Internet is looking about as normal and benign as you'd see on any given day. I would say (the worm) is behind us," said Tom Ohlsson, vice president of marketing for Matrix NetSystems Inc., a US firm that monitors Internet traffic flows.

There were Internet slow-downs on Monday, but they were scattered and seemed to tail off entirely as the day wore on.

Earlier in the day, some firms reported problems as they scrambled to install fortifications against future intrusions.

Yahoo Inc., one of several major US Internet businesses to downplay the impact of the attack, said on Monday that the fast-spreading worm had disrupted video and audio streaming services for a few hours on Saturday.

In Europe, security firms reported relatively fewer infected networks than in Asia and the United States. European markets were largely unaffected.

"You'll see variants out there," said Bruce Schneier, Chief Technology Officer of networking monitoring company Counterpane Internet Security.

Schneier said that some of the steps taken to prevent SQL (pronounced "sequel") Slammer from spreading to other networks were stopgap measures that could be easily overcome, raising the threat of more attacks on the flow of information and data across the Web.

The worm spreads through network connections rather than via e-mail, the medium for previous high-profile virus attacks.

The malicious code exploits a weakness in Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 2000 SQL server database software, although it does not delete or otherwise touch data. It caused servers to crash and congested traffic on the global network.

Security advisors warned that the worm was designed to rapidly infiltrate networks and that it would continue to do so until servers were sufficiently patched.

Microsoft has developed a patch that can be downloaded at: http://www.microsoft.com/technet/treeview/default.asp?url/technet/security/bulletin/MS02-039.asp.

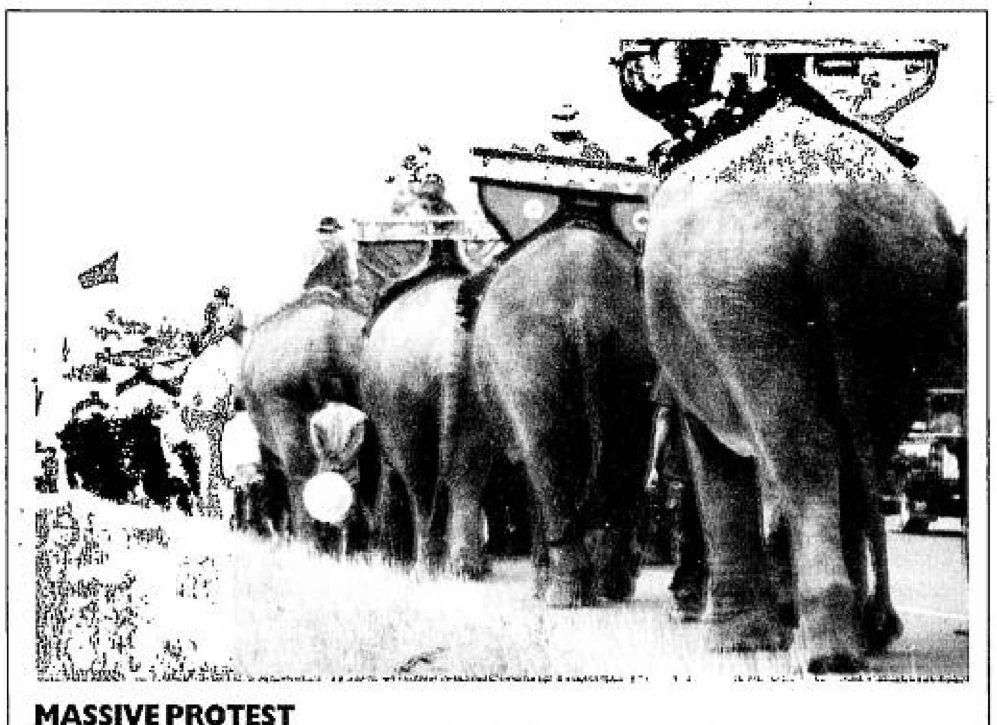
Microsoft's top security strategist Scott Charney said that the world's largest software maker was reaching out to its SQL customers to urge them to download the patch.

"The single largest message is: keep your system up to date with patches," Charney said.

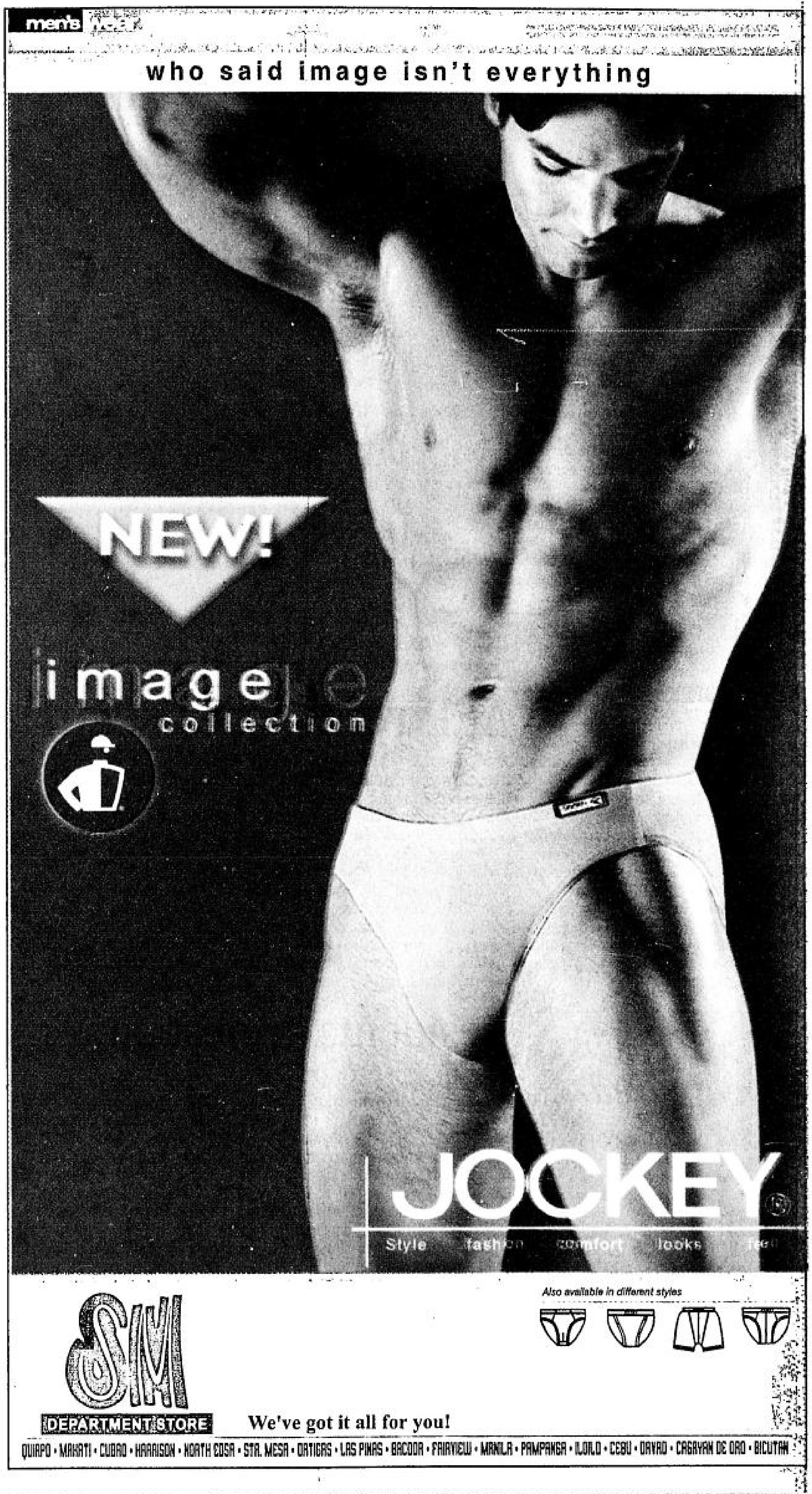
Genes marveled at the design of Slammer, noting that its tiny size of 376 bytes—about as dense as the subject line of an e-mail message—enabled it to spread quickly. As is often the case, the worm's author left no indication of his location or motive, Genes said.

Authorities in South Korea and the United States announced they would investigate.

"It is a serious problem that people's lives were disrupted," South Korean President Kim Dae-jung said in a statement, adding that he had instructed ministries to act to prevent further virus attacks. *Reuters*



MASSIVE PROTEST
Elephant handlers and charges, recently evicted from Bangkok by Thai authorities, set out on a protest march in Surin province, 500 km northeast of Bangkok, Jan. 28. They are attempting a 20-day march to Bangkok to seek government help and to defy recent attempts by police and a special government mahout team to round up the animals which roam the capital's traffic-clogged streets.
REUTERS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13 hurt in Kidapawan blast

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
PDI Mindanao Bureau

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Thirteen people, including a police bomb expert, were injured after an incendiary devise went off in front of a parcel delivery center here at around 1 p.m. yesterday.

The attack came hours after North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol announced his administration's total disarmament policy against all unauthorized armed groups in the province, be it the Moro Islamic Liberation Front or the New People's Army.

Senior Supt. Casimero Medes, city police chief, said the bomb exploded before members of the Explosives and Ordnance Division could defuse it.

The blast caused a fire and damaged the front side of an LBC center on Quezon Boulevard. It also affected a nearby Avon cosmetics store.

Some of the victims were agents and costumers of the cosmetics store. The blast site was just a few meters from a police detachment.

The blast severed the right arm of Hermegio Belasa of the Explosives and Ordnance Division personnel Sgt. Hermegio Belasa, who was holding the box containing the bomb, Medes said.

At the hospital, Belasa kept on saying over the telephone: "*Hindi ko na kaya, sir*.(I can't take it anymore, sir)"

At past noon yesterday, Bantay Bomba organizer Ben Pineda, received a text message from an unknown sender who informed the office about a bomb placed outside the LBC center. Bantay Bomba was created following the recent spate of bomb attacks and threats in North Cotabato.

Pineda said he immediately passed the information to the police. Lawmen cordoned off the area.

The first message was followed with three other messages from the same unknown sender.

"*Sir, bilis po kayo kasi talagang may bomba* (Sir, please hurry up because there really is a bomb)," read the text message sent at 12:44 p.m.

It was followed with: "*Dalawa tao ang naglagay ng* bomb. *Naksakay sila ng* red na Honda motorcycle. *Papunta silang Davao* (Two persons placed the bomb. They were riding on a red Honda motorcycle and headed for Davao)."

The messages were from mobile phone No. 09187561292.

RHB rebels shoot dead ex-policeman

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Two communist rebels shot dead a retired policeman in Zambales on Monday, an Army report reaching this regional police camp said.

The report, citing extortion as motive in the attack, identified the killers of SPO3 Crisanto Aglusolos of Barangay Nagbayan in Castillejos town as members of the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan, a rival faction of the New People's Army.

The Army also blamed the RHB for the attack on Randy Ovilla, a rebel returnee from Mabini, Pangasinan last week.

Herminio Manzano, alias Ka Freddie, and a certain Ka Joy were named as suspects.

The RHB, the armed wing of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines, had not owned or denied the two incidents.

In Pampanga, soldiers of the 69th Infantry Battalion and 46th Military Intelligence Command in Lubao town captured two suspected NPA rebels.

The two, identified as Richard and Arnulfo Agustin, were said to be plotting against a supposed informer in the town. Soldiers reported seizing from them a .38 cal. revolver, live ammunition and antigovernment documents.

In Northern Luzon, the Army reported the surrender of an NPA leader.

The report identified the surrenderer as Rogelio Laguinday, alias Ka Ruso, Chavez and Wadi, alleged vice commander of the Baggas guerrilla front of the Ilocos-Cordillera Regional Committee.

It quoted Laguinday, 44, as citing "unending squabbles on financial matters and leadership differences" as his reasons for surrendering.

US-RP WAR GAMES
DENNIS SABANGAN
Filipino paratroopers prepare for their air jump during the US-RP joint training exercises in Clark, Pampanga.

AFP reinforces security for US troops

ZAMBOANGA CITY—With renewed threats from the Abu Sayyaf Group, the Southern Command has reinforced the security personnel for the yearlong stay of American forces here.

Southcom chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, said in a phone interview that more troops had been poured into this city to ensure that "they (American troops) are protected," even as he insisted that the Abu Sayyaf's threats are "mostly empty threats."

He refused to give details on the extra security measures for the Bayanihan 2003, where American soldiers will train their Filipino counterparts.

Col. Alexander Yapching, chief of the Task Force Zamboanga, said he had requested for more Army troops coming from their mother unit, the 1st Infantry Division.

"Part of our proposal we did three weeks ago was to recommend the 1st and 2nd Division Reconnaissance Companies to beef up the present forces that we have," Yapching told the INQUIRER.

Yapching, who is also host of Camp Arturo Enrile where the foreign soldiers will be staying, said he had also asked for more funds.

Camp Enrile has become vulnerable to terrorist attacks because of the installation of a US training facility and sleeping quarters, he said.

On Oct. 2 last year, an American soldier was killed while another was wounded when suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits planted a bomb outside a videoke bar some five meters from the gate of the camp.

Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

7 MILF rebs captured

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Seven Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels were captured after a firefight in Damulog, Bukidnon on Monday.

Captured were Commander Ayog Abdullah and six of his men. They were based in Basag Complex in Damulog.

Government troops confiscated a .50 cal. sub-machinegun with a box of ammunition, two M-16, an M-14 and a Garand rifles, a handheld radio and documents.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya, in a phone interview, confirmed the arrest of the MILF rebels after almost four hours of fighting with Army soldiers of the 8th Infantry Battalion.*Grace Cantal-Albasin and Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Residents protest power plant inauguration

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BATANGAS CITY—Simultaneous with President Macapagal-Arroyo's inauguration of the San Lorenzo power plant in Barangay Sta. Rita in this city, about 50 residents of Mendoza Road, also in the barangay, staged a rally against the power plant.

They alleged that the facility has brought them diseases and death. **(See related story pn Page A2.)**

Gaudencio Dimaandal, president of the Samahang Pinahahalagahan ang Buhay at Ari-arian (SPBA), said that since the First Gas power plant put up its high-power transmission lines along Mendoza Road, incidence of lung cancer and heart attacks rose in the neighborhood.

The SPBA claimed it has recorded three deaths from lung cancer and another three deaths from heart attack among the residents.

First Gas rented a 12-square-meter three property on which its high-power transmission power was built, Dimaandal said. "That is not enough to protect us from the electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation. And we have reason to believe that EMF caused the deaths of our neighbors," he said.

But Siemens AG's Dr. Christian Urbanke said Siemens was not responsible for the acquisition of the land where the transmission lines were erected.

"We are only the technical adviser on how the transmission lines should be built and how to manage it," Urbanke said.

He said that in Germany and many other European countries where Siemens built power plants, most of the high-power transmission lines are also located in highly residential areas.

"If there were really some concerns about the electromagnetic field, then our government shouldn't have allowed transmission lines to pass over the residential areas," Urbanke said.

"We all know how particularly strict Germany is when it comes to health concerns. Actually the residents' protest is not new. We've been dealing with that, years before. The issue centers more on land acquisition than health risk."

Dimaandal said the high-power transmission lines should have [placed within] a 50-by-50-meter zone from the nearest residential area and should never have been put up in a residential area like Mendoza Road.

"We want First Gas to buy our land and our houses located near the transmission lines," Dimaandal said. "Only then can we be given assurance that our health and lives will not be at risk from EMF radiation that could cause cancer."

SPBA records show that Dimaandal's father Calixto, 76, died of lung cancer on April 26, 1999. Other lung cancer fatalities were Francisco Banaag, 60, who died two years ago, and Gilberto Ilagan, 54, who died on July 22 last year.

Gaudencio Ilagan, 86, another resident, died last Saturday from heart attack, while Felipe Caraos, 65, and his wife Maria, 60, died on June 8, 2001.

The First Gas power plant in Sta. Rita Kalsada started commercial production in July 2000.

No compromise with polluting firm, DENR urged

By Christine A. Gaylican

RESIDENTS of Barangay Looc, Mandaue City and the Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines have urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources not to strike a compromise with United States-based FMC Marine Colloids (Philippines) Inc. unless it agrees to clean up the Mactan Channel.

Barangay Looc townspeople and Filipino-owned companies based in Visayas and Mindanao engaged in the manufacture of carrageenan have asked the DENR and the Environment Management Bureau to be fair in its implementation of sanctions as the US subsidiary has been polluting the Mactan Channel for the past 20 years.

Barangay Looc residents and the organization of seaweed companies have expressed apprehension that the regional Environmental Management Board might strike a compromise that may be favorable to FMC.

Residents of Barangay Looc said in a letter to DENR Secretary Elisea Gozun that the latest results of analyses of water samples taken in the area where the submarine discharge pipe of FMC is located indicated that some 635 biological oxygen demand (BOD) is required.

This is beyond the average level of waste discharge allowed in Philippine seas, which is 120 BOD.

"This is the result of analyses samples taken by two EMB staff in an unannounced check of water samples taken in the waters where FMC's submarine cables where located," said Looc Barangay Capt. Editha Cabahug in a letter to DENR dated Jan. 21.

She cited in the letter that FMC has a probable linkage to the massive fish kill in the area that occurred in February 1995.

Cabahug said FMC is not only violating Philippine Anti-Pollution Laws but has misled and misinformed the municipality and the other government agencies with their operations.

Cabahug said FMC is continuously operating and these violations are incurred even in the midst of an ongoing case filed by the seaweed association and the barangay's pending complaint filed on Sept. 14, 2001.

"For more than 20 years, FMC in the course of their operations has dumped harmful waste into the Mactan Channel and in our barangay that may have caused damage to our coastal resources and affected the livelihood of our people," noted Cabahug.

According to SIAP president Benson Dakay, other carrageenan processors based in Mandaue and whose operations are also near the Mactan Channel were immediately issued cease-and-desist orders by the EMB.

"Other seaweed processors like the Konyx Manufacturing Corp. and President Marine Corp. were immediately asked to stop their operations when the DENR saw that they are polluting the Mactan waters (that has) between 300 to 450 BOD. So what is stopping the EMB from doing the same with FMC?" Dakay asked.

The DENR has estimated that FMC should spend about P1 billion to clean up some 200 hectares of the polluted Mactan Channel.

FMC is also mandated to pay P1,000 a day for any delay in their clean up.

ROUNDUP

Firearms seized

NARVACAN, Ilocos Sur—Police confiscated several firearms from three houses in separate raids in this town on Thursday. Chief Insp. Rolando Osias, provincial chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, identified the gun owners as Emmanuel Valentino and his daughter-in-law Rosejean Valentino of Barangay Sta. Lucia, and Eric Comiso of Barangay San Antonio. Seized from Comiso's house were a baby Armalite, two .45 cal. pistols, a 9-mm pistol and bullets. Police seized a 9-mm-pistol, a .45 cal.-pistol and bullets in separate raids on Valentinos' houses. Police filed charges of illegal possession of firearms against the suspects before a court in Vigan City. ***Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

5 inmates escape

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—Five criminals escaped from the provincial jail here after they destroyed the iron grills of their cell's window early Saturday morning, police said. One of them was shot and killed while another was caught. Police identified the escapees as Nestor Buenaventura, 38, a native of Albay; Jovy Arante, 30, of Iloilo; Nazairo Marcaida, 24, of Albay; Christopher Raule 20, of Catanduanes, and Leonardo Patanao 36, of Sta. Cruz, Manila. Jail guards Pio Rivera and Oscar Mendoza tried to arrest Patanao who fought back with an ice pick, prompting them to fire their guns. Arante was caught, while the others are now being hunted.
Fausto Tatad Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Zero crime rate

LOOC, Occidental Mindoro—The crime rate here is zero, except for some petty quarrels that are usually settled at the barangay level, said chief of police Revadilo Dapito, who has been stationed in Agkawayan town since November last year. Association of Barangay Captains president Nardo Trambulo attributed this to the fact that most of the 10,000 residents are related by blood or affinity. Residents, however, felt some fear when 21 members of the New People's Army sought refuge on the island in October last year. Dapito said Army soldiers came in December, but the rebels had already fled.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Judge 'clears' self

TABACO CITY—Executive Judge Arnulfo Cabredo of the Tabaco Regional Trial Court and presiding judge of RTC Branch 15, a special court for heinous crimes, considered himself "cleared" of charges that he committed abuse of discretion when he issued a temporary restraining order that led to the escape of the MV Criston, a vessel allegedly used in rice smuggling. This, after the Department of Justice filed smuggling and other criminal charges against a Chinese trader and three others in connection with the smuggling of 35,000 sacks of rice into this city's seaport in September 2001. The DOJ, however, excluded him in the charges despite President Macapagal-Arroyo's order.
Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

25 'lumad' rebs yield

MATI, Davao Oriental—At least 25 Mandaya men, who became regular members of the New People's Army operating in the province, have surrendered as of Dec. 31 last year, according to a report released by the office of Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil. The report said the rebels, who are from the towns of Caraga and Baganga, had been given livelihood assistance. Earlier, Palma Gil, herself a Mandaya, urged indigenous peoples who have joined the insurgents to give up and help develop their communities.
Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Rebels abduct cop

DAVAO CITY—Suspected communist rebels abducted a policeman assigned in Pantukan, Compostela Valley on Thursday night, reports reaching the Southern Mindanao police said yesterday. The report said the rebels, led by a Commander Lando, barged into the house of SPO1 Hermogenes Looc at Sitio Townsite in Barangay Kingking at around 7:30 p.m. and dragged him away. Pantukan policemen led by Insp. Raul Marante pursued the rebels but failed to catch up with them.
Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Man attacks family

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A woman was killed while four others were seriously wounded when a man attacked his own family with a scythe and a kitchen knife yesterday. Chief Insp. Antonio Clarito, city police operation officer, said the suspect, Noel Quirante, who was reportedly suffering from mental illness, attacked members of his family inside their house in Barangay Tetuan at around 5 a.m. Quirante's wife Betty died at the Zamboanga City Medical Center. Wounded were his daughter Mary Jane and her live-in partner Dante Aguilar, his nephew Reneboy Penares, and uncle Carlos Hontiveros. Responding policemen shot and killed the suspect. Clarito said Quirante was also suffering from malaria.
Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tension grips Oroquieta over mayoral post

OROQUIETA CITY—Tension gripped this capitol city of Misamis Occidental as hearings of a protest against the proclamation of Mayor Nancy Bandala as duly elected chief executive during the May 14, 2001 polls started Monday.

The first day of hearing was reset for Tuesday after the protesters questioned its holding in the absence of a Commission on Elections official designated to oversee the process.

The proceedings unfolded amid tight security at the venue of the hearings at the provincial election office.

A police officer gave assurance that his men were ready to guard against any move to disrupt the proceedings.

The hearings were aimed at allowing members of the Board of Election Inspectors (BEI) of 71 poll precincts to explain why the paper seals of the envelopes containing their precincts' election returns were missing.

Because of this, defeated mayoral candidate Alejandro Berenguel said the balloting results in the questioned precincts were doubtful, and should not be included in the canvass.

But the Board of Canvassers (BOC) dismissed Berenguel's protest and proceeded to proclaim Bandala winner.

Berenguel filed an appeal before the Comelec on the same grounds and sought the nullification of Bandala's proclamation.

During the 2001 polls, Bandala led Berenguel by more than a thousand votes of the more than 20,000 votes cast. This would be materially affected if the results of the 71 questioned precincts, comprising more than 10,000 votes, were excluded in determining the winner of the mayoral contest.

The Comelec *en banc* has tasked the provincial election officer with getting the explanation of the BEI members.

Lawyer Francisco Pobe, provincial election officer, has set the hearings for Jan. 27-31, 2003 upon the order of the Comelec *en banc.*

Sorsogon

In Sorsogon City, the Comelec has declared Mayor Sally Lee's triumph in the 2001 elections "null and void."

The poll body's second division granted a petition filed by Lee's rival, former Bacon town mayor Leovic Dioneda, to exclude in the counting of votes the result of canvassing in Precinct No. 28A2 of Barangay Bucalbucalan, where Lee obtained a 68-vote margin.

Dioneda contested Election Return No. 41150266, saying the results could have been doctored.

The INQUIRER tried to reach the mayor by phone at her house in Sorsogon City on Sunday and yesterday, but a house help said she was in Manila and did not know the mayor's phone number there.

In the 11-page resolution penned by the three commissioners presided over by Ralph Lantion, the new city BEI was ordered to declare Lee's proclamation void from the start in accordance with Section 20 of Republic Act 7166.

Commissioners Melchor Sadain and Florentino Tuazon Jr. said in the resolution that, "having found irregularities that vitiate the authenticity of the election return as one prepared by a person or persons other than the members of the BEI, said return must be excluded from the canvass."

The commission also directed members of the new BEI to prepare a new statement of votes for the position of city mayor, excluding the election return of precinct No. 28A2, and proceed to proclaim the winning mayor.

The division also directed its law department to investigate the BEI members of Barangay Bucalbucalan for possible Comelec offenses. *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Case of missing guns probed

BACOLOD CITY—The City Prosecutor's Office (CPO) is investigating the disappearance of two guns and marked money, which are being used as evidence in cases still pending in courts.

Prosecutor Augustus Rallos recently formed a task force to identify the persons involved in the loss of the court exhibits, which were kept inside the evidence room of the CPO on Gatuslao Street.

He said the three-man task force was also conducting an inventory to find out if other pieces of evidence had disappeared.

Assistant Prosecutor Ben Maido chairs the task force. His members are Assistant Prosecutors Eduardo Sayson and Danilo Tabat.

Rallos said the two guns were reported missing on Nov. 13 last year, although, he said, these might have been taken from the evidence room much earlier.

He refused to provide details about the firearms so as not to preempt the investigation of the task force.

Rallos also declined to say the amount of missing money, except that this came from alleged proceeds of illegal gambling taken during police operations.

He, however, admitted that the disappearance of the guns and marked money would affect the prosecution of the cases. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Supreme Court asks gov't cooperation to decongest courts

KIDAPAWAN CITY—A Supreme Court official has asked for the full cooperation of other government agencies as part of the High Tribunal's bid to decongest court dockets and address the perennial problem of delays in the resolution of court cases throughout the country.

"We will need the cooperation and assistance of our partner agencies, such as the Department of Justice, the law enforcement agencies, local government units, and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines," SC Deputy Administrator Christopher Lock, speaking before participants of the first Cotabato Judicial Summit here Friday, said.

Lock said a judicial program called Action Program for Judicial Reform (APJR) had been devised to address the problems that have long confronted the judiciary. The same problems have caused the public's loss of faith and trust in the Philippine justice system, he said.

"The APJR consists of projects for improved and continuing education for judges and court personnel, upgrading of court facilities, streamlining of court procedures, improving communication with the public (and) many other efforts towards this end," Lock said. The APJR includes the automation of court procedures through computers, he said.

Lock said the program was geared toward achieving Chief Justice Hilario Davide's "vision of an effective and efficient judiciary worthy of public trust and confidence."

"These are interlocking activities that support and promote one another. If they are all successful, then we can have a much improved, even revolutionized judiciary that will be able to swiftly and effectively deliver justice," Lock added.

Some suggestions to decongest court dockets are the effective use of pre-trial and settlement techniques, availability of non-judicial forum, and continuous trial, he said.

"Everyone agrees, of course, that the key factor is a competent and industrious judge," Lock pointed out.

For Cotabato, Lock said, the Supreme Court was stressing the immediate establishment of a mediation center for negotiated peace between or among the litigants in a court case.

"Because this peace is brought about by the parties' agreements, it is more lasting and less costly than a settlement achieved through a court battle," he said.

He said the figure of successfully mediated cases translates to less cases that should be heard, researched, and decided upon by judges. But mediation, he stressed, is not only merely settling disputes.

"Mediation develops a culture of peace among those who employ it. It is probably logical to estimate that as more people use mediation as a means of settling their arguments, the more this culture of peace will be developed among Filipinos," he said.
Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

2 village officials charged with obstruction of justice

BACOLOD CITY—Two village officials on Monday were charged with obstruction of justice for intervening in the arrest of a suspected drug dealer that led to his escape.

The police Provincial Anti-Illegal Task Force (PAITF) filed the complaint against Laura Blasi, chair of Barangay 27, and Ricardo Brana, barangay councilor, before the City Prosecutor's Office.

The PAITF said Diosdado Pugoy IV, of Lopez Jaena Street, Barangay 27, who was charged with peddling illegal drugs, escaped on Jan. 10 after the two village officials interfered when the policemen tried to arrest him.

Police have filed a complaint of violation of the Comprehensive Drugs Act against Pugoy.

Blasi has denied the charges, saying she went to the area after receiving a complaint that policemen had beaten up the suspect and after she heard a burst of gunfire.

Attached in the complaint against the village officials was the joint affidavit of Chief Insp. Calixberto Mabugat, PAITF chief, and Chief Insp. Armando Tubongbanua and SPO2 Gilbert Linda, task force members.

The policemen said Pugoy resisted arrest when they pounced on him on Jan. 10 following a buy-bust operation in which a civilian informant allegedly bought P200 worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) from the suspect.

After they finally subdued Pugoy, the village officials, along with the suspect's relatives, allegedly intervened, giving the suspect a chance to flee while still in handcuffs.

Blasi said she merely asked the policemen if they had evidence against the suspect after she saw them beating Pugoy.

When Pugoy walked away, she added, the policemen did not stop him. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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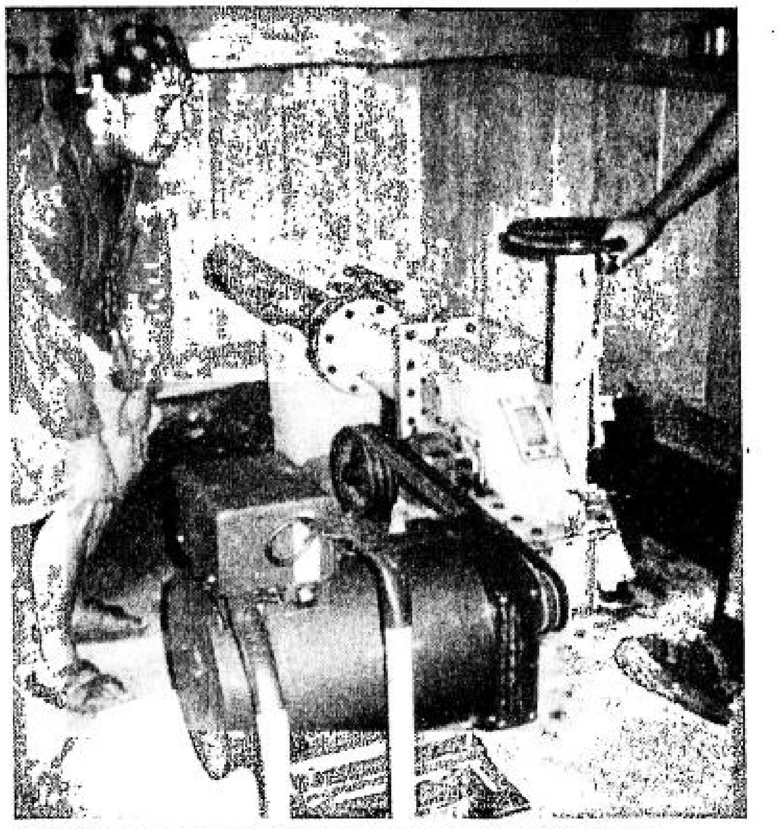
MABAKA children join in the community's celebration of success.

PHOTOS BY MAURICE MALANES



THE TURBINE and generator of hope among the Mabaka folk.

Mabaka folk light world in Apayao

By Maurice Malanes
Conner, Apayao

FOR A two-day feast on Jan. 17-18, the Mabaka folk of a remote village in Conner, Apayao, prepared something exotic for themselves and their visitors.

They hunted four adult deer and 47 wrist-size eels to augment a carabao (water buffalo), two native pigs, 47 chickens and 72 anibong (wild palm) shoots, which the upland folk served to their guests.

The almost 300 Mabaka folk of Buneg, a sub-village of Barangay Nabuangan, had good reasons to celebrate. The villagers invited guests who included priests, local officials and neighboring villagers, to witness the Jan. 18 inauguration of one of the first community-run micro-hydropower projects in Apayao.

It was early evening when, after a nine-hour uphill and downhill trek to Buneg on Jan. 16, we could view the well-lighted village amid a pristine forest.

Welcoming us at the entrance to the village were teenage boys beating gongs and women who hanged around our necks beads made out of wild vine fruits.

When another journalist and I visited Buneg in July last year, the village was dark at night because all the villagers had for lighting were kerosene lamps.

Each household now has at least two 20-kilowatt florescent bulbs, and, at night, the path to the clustered households is aglow with 10 streetlights, outshining the fireflies around trees nearby.

During a mass wedding and mass baptism on Jan. 17, a karaoke sound system made it easier for officiating priest Gerardo Gudmalin to drive home his message about the "power of God" as shown in the community's "power of unity, cooperation and love for each other."

A medical-dental mission led by Conner health officer Dr. Fely Juan immediately followed and the sound system also helped health workers in announcing vital procedures.

Then came the opening of the celebration on the night of Jan. 17. With the sound system, the audience could clearly listen to men and women delivering their *uggayam* (a prayer chant) and singing their *salidummay* (traditional lullaby).

And with the lights on around a tent-covered spacious yard, both villagers and guests danced the night away to the beat of gongs, fighting off drowsiness and fatigue with *basi* (sugarcane wine), brewed coffee and rice cakes.

During the Mass the following morning, the micro-hydropower facility became a handy tool for analogy and metaphor, which spiced homilies and speeches.

Singing praises to the Mabaka folk's unity as a community, Fr. Feliciano Agatep, administrator of the Catholic diocese of Tabuk, Kalinga, described the villagers as "the light of the world" who could inspire others to also light up their remote villages with "God's abundant renewal resource"—water.

Triumph of human spirit

It took almost six years before the Mabaka folk finally lighted up their homes with a click of a switch from the powerhouse of the 7.5-kw micro-hydropower facility on Sept. 11 last year.

While the rest of the world were mourning the first memorial of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, Buneg villagers were celebrating their last farewell to their kerosene lamps.

But they set the inauguration last Jan. 18 because they had to harvest first their rice and they needed more time to prepare for the "big day."

Pablo Agagen, leader of the community's people's organization and now Nabuangan barangay chair, said there had been times when they almost gave up on the project because they had to haul on their shoulders heavy materials and equipment for the project.

"But we were determined to pursue the project," he said. "Our source of strength was our own patience and our *innabuyog* (culture of cooperation)."

Through their cooperative self-help, they hauled in March last year a 400-kg turbine. Eight men at a given time had to carry the machine, which was tied to a bamboo pole.

Other men were on the ready so any of them could relieve someone who got tired even after a few meters. They did the same thing with the generator and other materials.

In July last year, we saw how all able-bodied members of the community helped in other activities for the project. Women and children hauled sand and stones from a river almost half a kilometer downstream and helped dig a diversion canal.

The recent inauguration was thus a celebration of the triumph of the people's spirit and love for their community.

"This is a celebration of your success, cooperation, unity and perseverance," said guest speaker Jove Benosa of the non-government Sibol Ng Agham at Teknolohiya (Sibat), which helped supervise the project. "It is no joke carrying a bag of cement and other materials for nine hours just so you could finish this project."

Lessons learned

The trip to Buneg helped enlighten visitors, including some municipal councilors and residents downstream who were at first apprehensive because they thought Buneg folk built a big dam, which might endanger downstream villagers.

But what they saw was about a meter-wide diversion canal from a nearby creek with a three-meter high and 10-meter long water impounding basin, from which a 10-inch diameter penstock (a big pipe) was attached to convey water to a powerhouse more than 100 meters below.

The water from the penstock rotates the turbine, which, in turn, runs a generator that generates electricity.

Freed from their dim kerosene lamps, children can now do their homework and read their school lessons at night, says public school teacher Rosalina Dangli.

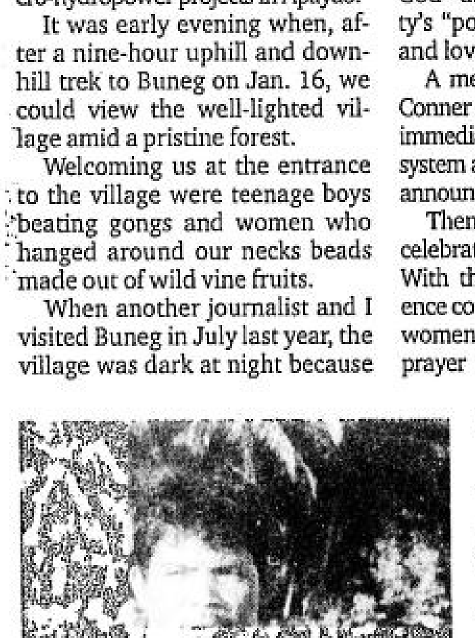
"With the bright lights, we can split firewood, weave mats and baskets, and pound rice even at nights," said Sonny Bag-ayan, a father of seven.

The community-run facility has proved cheaper than kerosene. According to Agagen, each household used to consume monthly an average of four liters of kerosene, which, at P19 a liter, used to cost each household P76 monthly.

In contrast, the community's Buneg Mabaka Tribal Organization (BMTO), which now oversees the facility, collects P20 monthly from each household with 40-watt florescent bulbs and 15-watt convenience outlet. The BMTO collects additional P10 monthly for excess watts.

The Mabaka folk have not stopped dreaming. They intend to raise funds for a community rice mill, which the turbine's mechanical energy can operate through a fan belt.

If freed from the tedious task of pounding rice, "we can have more time for our farms and for other means of livelihood, and our children can have more time for their school lessons," said Bag-ayan.



FISHERMAN Alberto Sindayan wishes for a common good to all fisherfolk around the Lingayen Gulf. JO CLEMENTE

Labrador fish, fisherfolk cry out for survival

By Jo Clemente
Labrador, Pangasinan

IT took them 50 minutes to pluck out the day's catch from their *sigay* (fishing net). That might seem long for the uninitiated, but for Simeon and Imelda Flores, it was quick as there was hardly any fish to remove from the net. Their catch: 25 *hasa-hasa*, two crabs and a lobster.

They were home in no time. In times of bounty, the couple, along with other residents in the fishing village of Tobuan in Labrador, Pangasinan, stay up till midnight, and they are not complaining. Under the moonlit skies, nothing can be more rewarding than the silver shimmer of fish clinging tightly on their nylon nets.

Alas, these days, a bounty catch has been hard to come by. And for the Flores couple and the rest, it is likely to remain that way—unless something is done.

Trawlers, fish cages

According to the residents, trawlers and fish cages in the nearby islands have caused the decline in catch. And the most they have done so far, says Alberto Sindayan, is sign up for a fisherman's organization. There are about 90 of them in the group.

Sindayan says the association has yet to evolve, but as an initial action, they try to "shoo away" the trawlers whenever they approach their area. What they cannot understand, he says, is why these vessels, which have been prohibited from fishing in other towns like Lingayen and Dagupan City, continue to come to Labrador.

Flores and Sindayan say trawling had caused so much damage to their source of livelihood. "*Dati napupuno ang banca, ngayon dalawang kilo na lang. Kapag nasuyod na ng trawler ang pupuntahan mo, malas na lang wala kang huli* (Our banca used to be filled with fish catch. Now, we get only two kilos of fish. After a trawler has scoured your area, you'll get nothing)," Sindayan said.

Trawlers drag big nets at the bottom of the sea. Bigger than ordinary pump boats, they can accommodate 15 to 20 people. Sindayan says a trawler usually stays for three days at sea and comes back with a catch of about 50 Styrofor boxes or *banyera* (tubs) that can hold 25 kilos of fish each.

"Because these trawlers use very fine woven nets, even fingerlings get trapped, eventually die and are thrown away," Sindayan said.

Sindayan, 36, survives on the bounty of the sea. He has been fishing with his father since he was 12 years old. Then, he said, "*may lapu-lapu pa dito at dalawang kilometro lang mula sa pampang, may isda na, tusok lang pwede nang mahuli* (There were lapu-lapu here, and two kilometers from the shore, one could catch fish even with a stick.)."

Today, he says, the fisherfolk have to move out farther at least 10 kilometers from the shore to fish. Even the fish species or varieties have changed. After this season of *hasa-hasa* and *sapsap*, they soon expect the swordfish to come. Still, the catch is not as plenty as before and not enough to sustain their families.

Pollution from fish cages is also a culprit, says Flores and Sindayan. *Bangus* fish cages abound off the Kabalitian Islands and Baquiwen in nearby Sual town. Fish meal and wastes contaminate the waters, and pollution eventually spreads out and drives away the fish, they said.

Forced to good

Paulino Dinofol, 46 is one of the helpers in a trawler owned by a businessman from Dagupan. Since he is a veteran of the *muro-ami* (destructive fishing method in the Visayas), having dived the seas since he was 14 years old in his hometown in Oslob, Cebu, he is a notch higher than his peers in the boat's chain of command.

Dinofol is aware of the conflict between the fisherfolk and commercial fishing vessels. "*Kailangan din kaming mabuhay* (We also need to earn)", he says. But he clarifies that helpers like him do not get a big share of the catch. "*Halos tabla lang* (Just enough)", he claims.

He explains that trawlers use fine woven nets because they also catch smaller fish varieties, like "*dilis*" and "*tunsoy*" that are usually sold to traders of dried fish. He says they do not simply throw away fingerlings as these are made into fish meal.

Going farther out in the open seas to fish, he says, is not an option because their vessel is only good in waters 40 fathoms deep.

All told, Alberto, Flores and Dinogol are one in their belief that the seas should be given some rest to allow the fish to hatch their eggs undisturbed by human activities. Indiscriminate fishing should be prohibited, they say, and the Gulf should be rid of fish cage pollution.

But who will take the first step in this direction? The fisherfolk of Labrador are crying out for survival. So, too, are the tiny fish they feed on.

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Squabbles delay vote on Tancangco impeachment

From page A1

not only to defend their stands on the sufficiency or insufficiency of the complaint but to try to sway their colleagues to vote their way.

More lawmakers, however, stood up to say the report of the justice committee headed by chair Rep. Marcelino Libanan should have been deemed as being sufficient in substance.

Among the congressmen were Arthur Defensor, Monico Puentevella, Antonio Nachura, Florencio Abad, Lawrence Wacnang and Oscar Rodriguez.

Representatives Didagen Dilangalen and Ronaldo Zamora, on the other hand, raised questions against the complainants in the case, the People vs Tancangco Movement led by the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), during interpellation.

Tancangco stands accused of graft and corruption, betrayal of the public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution stemming from her actions as Comelec commissioner.

Among the charges against her were her failure as chair of the Comelec modernization committee to automate vote-counting in the May 2001 elections, her alleged bias for the Voters Registration and Information System that saw the P6.5-billion project awarded to Photokina even when the Comelec had a budget of only P1.2 billion for it, and her carrying out of the precinct mapping project when expenses for it were not authorized by law.

Pointing out that the Comelec makes decisions as a "collegial body," Zamora asked why the complainants did not include the other Comelec commissioners who were members of the modernization committee in the impeachment complaint.

Dilangalen, on the other hand, accused the complainants of singling out Tancangco when he said that he learned from a colleague that the complainants "deliberately" did not include Commissioners Ralph Lantion, Mehol Sadain and Rufino Javier in the case.

Dilangalen said the complaint was brought against Tancangco because Namfrel "failed to dictate its terms on the Comelec modernization committee" after Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion and his group allegedly failed to bag a Comelec project.

Concepcion, however, warned congressmen that they risked the ire of the voters if they junked the impeachment complaint.

"This is their moment, their appointment with history. If the 12th Congress wants to redeem itself, let the truth come out in a process of investigation," Concepcion told reporters before the voting could get under way. "It's an election year so they will be judged by how they vote here."

Concepcion said the People's Movement vs Tancangco would publish the vote of every congressman.

Concepcion said even Zobel was shocked at the details of how advances in the computerization project allegedly went to Tancangco and her relatives as revealed by Puentevella, sponsor of the impeachment bid.

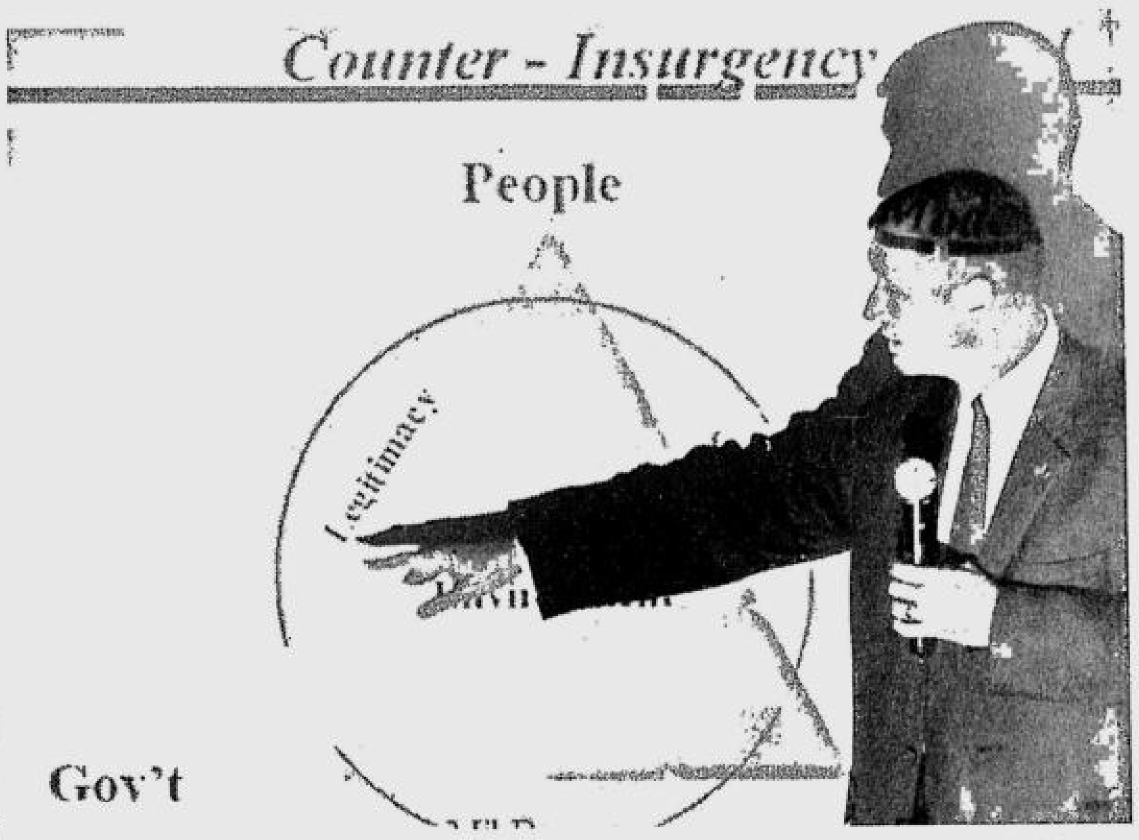
"I'm glad I came here. I didn't know it was as rotten as this," he quoted Zobel as saying.

The impeach-Tancangco group came out in full force at the House, filling the gallery even before the session could begin.

Spotted among the observers aside from Concepcion and Zobel were Vicente Jaime of the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference, Teresita Baltazar of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and Karen Tañada of Kompil.

"I'm completely disappointed because the chair himself admitted that they did not conduct an investigation and did not get to the facts of the complaint," Concepcion said.

He said the "mood" was to remand the report to the justice committee to give the Tancangco case a full hearing.



COMMANDER of the US-Philippine Special Operation Task Force, Col. Douglas Lengenfelder, briefs journalists on Tuesday at the US Embassy on counterinsurgency strategy. AFP

US ready to target communist…

From page A1

"We are trying to assist in creating a capability for the Republic of the Philippines to then use as they see the need," said Lengenfelder.

"We really don't have a say and we really wouldn't want to" in deciding where the US-trained Filipino troops will be deployed, he told reporters.

The issue is a sensitive one for the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who last week said she had approved a new peace proposal for the communists. The rebels said they would accept it only if the government halted military operations, recognized a human rights accord reached in past negotiations and stopped referring to them as terrorists. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Both the communist New People's Army and the Abu Sayyaf are on the US list of terrorist organizations.

Lengenfelder said the new $78-million exercises would involve the Philippine Army's rapid reaction companies and light infantry battalions, and include maintenance of Vietnam War-era Huey helicopters, night-vision flight training and fusion of operations and intelligence skills.

An advance party of about a dozen US troops involved in the 10-month program has arrived in Zamboanga to prepare for the February opening of the joint exercises.

Lengenfelder would not say how many US troops were expected to participate in the military exercises to be held at a jungle training camp in Zamboanga.

Filipino military officials earlier said about 200 to 300 US troops were scheduled to join the exercises.

AP, AFP

Ka Roger mystery meeting puzzles cops

By Christian V. Esguerra

POLICE are puzzling over the alleged meeting between Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal and a ranking government official three days before the assassination of Romulo Kintanar.

The spokesperson of the New People's Army was spotted visiting the official at an office "somewhere near" the Quezon Memorial Circle where Kintanar was killed, according to a ranking police officer privy to the investigation.

Police are still confirming whether the meeting was conducted to firm up the details of the assassination, the source told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"It appears that Ka Roger personally facilitated the killing of Kintanar," the source said.

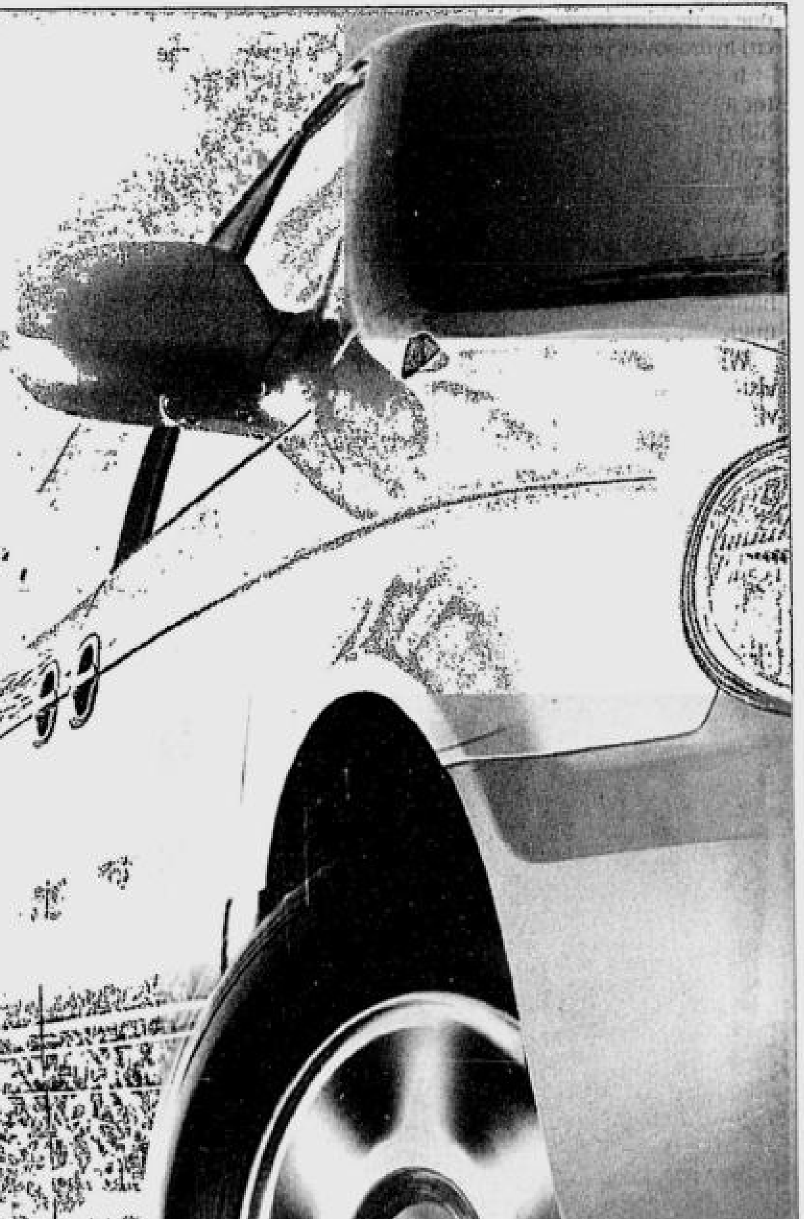
Sought for comment, Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto said Rosal's claim Sunday of responsibility for the killing could have been meant to keep investigators from quizzing the official who had supposedly met with him.

"Perhaps he was just trying to protect the official," said Maganto, whom President Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed head of a special task force assigned to hunt down Kintanar's killers and neutralize NPA hit squads.

"In making the admission, the NPA leadership knew it would be harder to go after a generic killer," Maganto said. "But we won't be fooled. We already know the identities of the killers."

Maganto said he and his men were on the trail of three employees of a Quezon City-based government agency who allegedly set up the killing.

He said the employees were close to Kintanar but that unknown to the ex-NPA chief, they were sympathizers of his enemies in the communist movement.



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88 RP bishops oppose US war in Iraq

By Armand Nocum

SPEAKING as one church, the country's influential Catholic bishops yesterday signaled their opposition to a war in Iraq.

Meeting at the Pope Pius X Center in Manila, 88 Catholic bishops from across the country expressed "grave concern" over the "threat of war" and issued a strong appeal for peace.

They directed the appeal to US President George W. Bush and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein as well as to Philippine authorities.

The bishops also asked President Macapagal-Arroyo not to support any unilateral US military offensive—in the same way the leaders of France, Germany and Russia have categorically asked the United States to wait for an official UN finding.

"We appeal to our own Philippine authorities not to support such a preemptive strike," they said in a statement drafted during their 86th Plenary Assembly. "On bended knees we beg the Lord to give peace to the world and turn the hearts of leaders to the ways of peace."

In a press briefing, CBCP president Archbishop Orlando Quevedo said the bishops want the President to take an unequivocal stand. "I would like that to happen, for her to take the side of the United Nations," he said.

"A war would seriously inflict great damage on the people of Iraq. Our own economy and people would most certainly be affected," the CBCP statement read.

The bishops called on the United States and its allies "not to launch an offensive against Iraq without explicit authorization from the United Nations."

The President, a staunch ally of the United States, has already said she was willing to extend logistical support to any US strike on Iraq, but has called for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. *With a report from AFP*

Bush readies US for war

From page A1

tives chamber at 9:01 p.m. EST on Tuesday (10:01 a.m. Wednesday in Manila) and speak before a joint session of Congress and an international television audience, the biggest bully pulpit possible to him.

Bush will face the task of convincing wary Americans that Iraq represents such a threat that US troops may be required to attack that nation, 12 years after his father won the Gulf War but left Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in power.

He will also seek to assure Americans that his $674-billion tax cut plan holds the key to restoring growth in the lackluster US economy, but the most crucial part of the speech will be about Iraq.

Aides said Bush would restate the US case against Saddam—that he has stockpiled chemical and biological weapons and is trying to build a nuclear bomb, that he has flouted a UN disarmament resolution by giving inspectors the runaround and that time is running out for the Iraqi leader to comply.

Security Council urge caution

"He's going to outline the facts in a very comprehensive way that explains and educates the American people about the direct threat Saddam Hussein poses, why we believe his recent behavior demonstrates an unwillingness to comply with world demands," said White House communications director Dan Bartlett.

Bush will "forcefully talk about the responsibilities we have as a country and as an international community as to why we must confront this threat," Bartlett said.

As Security Council members urge the United States to use caution and give inspections more time, however, Bush will not issue a deadline for Saddam to comply or declare war against Iraq.

US officials gave no hint of when Bush would decide on going to war. Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Monday that the United States would consult with its allies over the next week and then decide what to do.

In his speech, Bush will also emphasize US charges that Iraq has had contacts with members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network. The lack of a clear link between Saddam and the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks has weakened the US case that Iraq should be considered part of the war on terrorism.

Powell said more information on the links would be forthcoming. Aides said this would likely come next week after Bush's meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair at Camp David.

Democratic lawmakers are demanding that the White House disclose to the public its evidence of weapons of mass destruction that Iraq denies having.

"At a time when we have only just begun to fight the war on terror, the American people deserve to hear why we should put hundreds of thousands of American troops at risk, spend perhaps hundreds of billions of dollars, risk alliances and inflame our adversaries to attack Iraq," said Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat.

CHIEF UN weapons inspector Hans Blix (right) reads his report on Iraqi weapons to the UN Security Council on Tuesday as UN Atomic Energy Agency head Mohamed ElBaradei looks on. REUTERS

Report of inspectors

Five key members of the Security Council—China, Russia, France, Germany and Syria—also said they saw no cause for war. They said that the reports of the UN weapons inspectors only supported the need for them to continue with their work.

But Britain's UN Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock, whose country has been the staunchest US ally, warned that "the issue is not going to be resolved peacefully through the UN process unless we have 100-percent cooperation from Iraq."

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Powell said it still wasn't too late for a peaceful solution to the crisis. But they added that the onus was now on Iraq to quickly provide access and answers about its nuclear, chemical, biological and weapons programs.

In his toughest criticism yet, UN chief inspector Hans Blix charged that Iraq had never genuinely accepted UN resolutions demanding its disarmament and warned that "cooperation on substance" was "indispensable" for a peaceful solution.

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament that was demanded of it," Blix, a Swedish diplomat, told the council.

Speaking next, Mohamed ElBaradei, an Egyptian who heads the UN nuclear control agency, said inspections of 106 sites had turned up no evidence so far that Iraq was reviving its nuclear program. With Iraq's cooperation, he said, "we should be able within the next few months to provide credible assurance that Iraq has no nuclear weapons programs."

"These few months would be a valuable investment in peace because it could help avoid a war," ElBaradei said.

Diplomats noted the stark difference in tone between the two reports, Blix stressing Iraq's failure to cooperate and ElBaradei focusing on Baghdad's cooperation.

Missing weapons

In his report, Blix said Iraq had failed to give inspectors information on the whereabouts of large quantities of the deadly VX nerve gas, growth media for biological agents such as anthrax, 550 artillery shells filled with mustard gas, 6,500 chemical bombs and Scud-type missiles with a range of more than 150 km.

Blix said his teams doubted Iraq's claims that it was unsuccessful in producing VX were untrue. "There are indications that the agent was weaponized," he said. Inspectors have also discovered a mustard gas precursor during recent inspections.

While ElBaradei asked for more time to carry out inspections, Blix made no such request in his 15-page report.

Later, behind closed-doors, Blix complained to the council that too many Iraqi government minders had been present during inspections and that Iraq had been systematically hiding documents in the homes of government employees.

But ElBaradei apparently disagreed with that assessment, taking a softer tone than his counterpart.

Under Security Council Resolution No. 1441, crafted by Washington and adopted unanimously by the council in November, inspectors don't need to prove Iraq is rearming.

Any false statements or omissions in Iraq's arms declaration, coupled with a failure to comply with and cooperate fully in the implementation of the resolution, would place Baghdad in "material breach" of its obligations—a finding that could open the door for war.

Most of the Security Council members believe that is a determination they must make based on the inspectors' assessments. The 15 council members will reconvene Wednesday to discuss the inspectors' reports and begin debate on Iraq.

Blix and ElBaradei will update the council again on Feb. 14. *Reports by AP and Reuters*

Asean foreign execs set 'extraordinary meeting'

From page A1

position in the country reached a new high, as the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines denounced a possible unilateral US strike (*See related story on Page A_*) and Vice President Teofisto Guingona said he would lead nationwide antiwar prayer rallies, starting on Friday at historic Plaza Miranda.

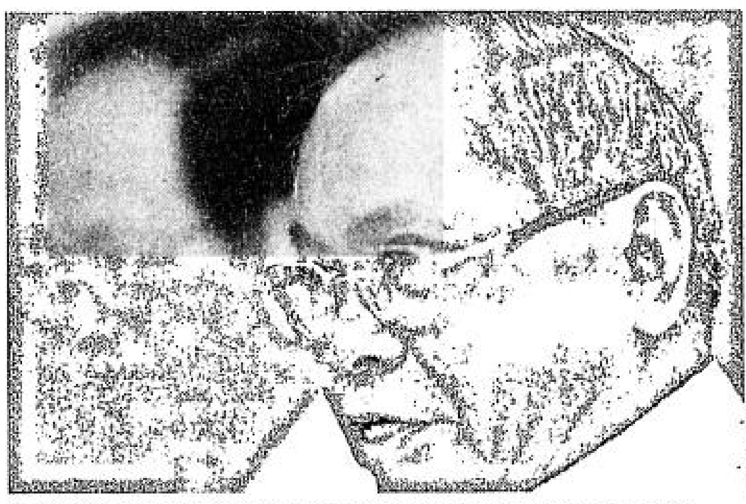
Ople did not say when the meeting would take place. The foreign ministers of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations are meeting with their 15 European Union counterparts in Brussels. They are next scheduled to hold talks during the Feb. 20-25 summit meeting of the Non Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Ople said there was a "common understanding" among Asean foreign ministers that the grouping "prefers a peaceful solution" to the crisis.

However, he said there was also "recognition that Iraq should comply with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions," he said.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell warned the other day that time was running out for Iraq to disarm in line with UN demands after weapons inspectors reported that Baghdad had failed to answer a host of questions about its alleged arms programs.



ERIK ARAZAS

BISHOPS led by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo with Bishop Teodoro Bacani appeal to President Macapagal not to support a US strike on Iraq.

Nationwide protests

Guingona said he would lead nationwide prayer rallies and protests against a likely US war in Iraq and the country's possible participation through "commitments" under the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement.

Guingona will be back in Plaza Miranda—where he participated in demonstrations against the Marcos dictatorship decades ago—to lead the prayer rally on Friday afternoon.

"The prayer rally is not against America . . . It is a rally against the shapers of policy that is surely leading us to war," he said.

In Malacañang, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said top officials of the US state and defense departments have assured him that the United States was not yet about to go to war with Iraq.

Golez said the US officials promised to give ample advance warning before Bush declares war against Iraq.

"The report of the UN Weapons Inspection Team and the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iraq is not going to be a trigger for full-scale war in the region this week," Golez said in a statement yesterday.

He said he spoke with US Deputy State Secretary Richard Armitage and Deputy Defense Secretary Richard Lawless.

"(Secretary) Lawless said there was no authorization yet from President Bush on the start of hostilities but that the US forces are finalizing their war preparations," Golez added.

He said Armitage promised that the Philippines would be given advance warning on the start of hostilities.

Inspection mission

In Baguio City, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said the Philippines was awaiting the outcome of a second and final weapons inspection mission by the United Nations before it commits to a US-led war against Iraq.

Reyes said the UN mission report of Jan. 27 was "quite inconclusive, so some countries are demanding more time for inspection."

"So we will have to await the final inspection report of the UN and the corresponding UN action," he said.

The Philippines' soft-pedalled approach to the prospect of war in Iraq abides by a new Malacañang policy that the country's defense against terrorism should never be labeled as a religious conflict, Reyes said.

"This has nothing to do with religion. This is a fight against terrorism. We cannot have this kind of labelling," he told reporters. *With reports from Armand N. Nocum, Norman Bordadora, Dona Pazzibugan; Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; and AFP*

Palace: Cimatu has 'blanket authority'

By Dona Pazzibugan and Ronnel W. Domingo

IT'S his call.

Malacañang said yesterday special envoy to the Middle East Roy Cimatu has "blanket authority" from the President to proceed with the government's contingency plans for the 1.4 million Filipinos in the Middle East any time he saw fit.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Cimatu, a former Armed Forces chief of staff, has the discretion to order an evacuation, in the event of a second US-led war in Iraq.

"He has been given blanket authority because he knows the situation, he's been there several times. All he needs to do is give the signal," Bunye said.

"We will consider the situation in Iraq always in relation to the UN (Security) Council resolution. In other words, we will always try to act within that resolution," Bunye added.

In case war erupts, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the country's petroleum supply would be protected.

Perez said the energy department had been preparing for such contingencies in the last few months and had required local oil firms to maintain a minimum stock effective Feb. 3.

Starting next week, local refiners are required to maintain a minimum fuel inventory of 30 days' supply as a precautionary measure against a possible world supply crisis.

Small oil firms will be required to keep stocks good for at least 15 days.

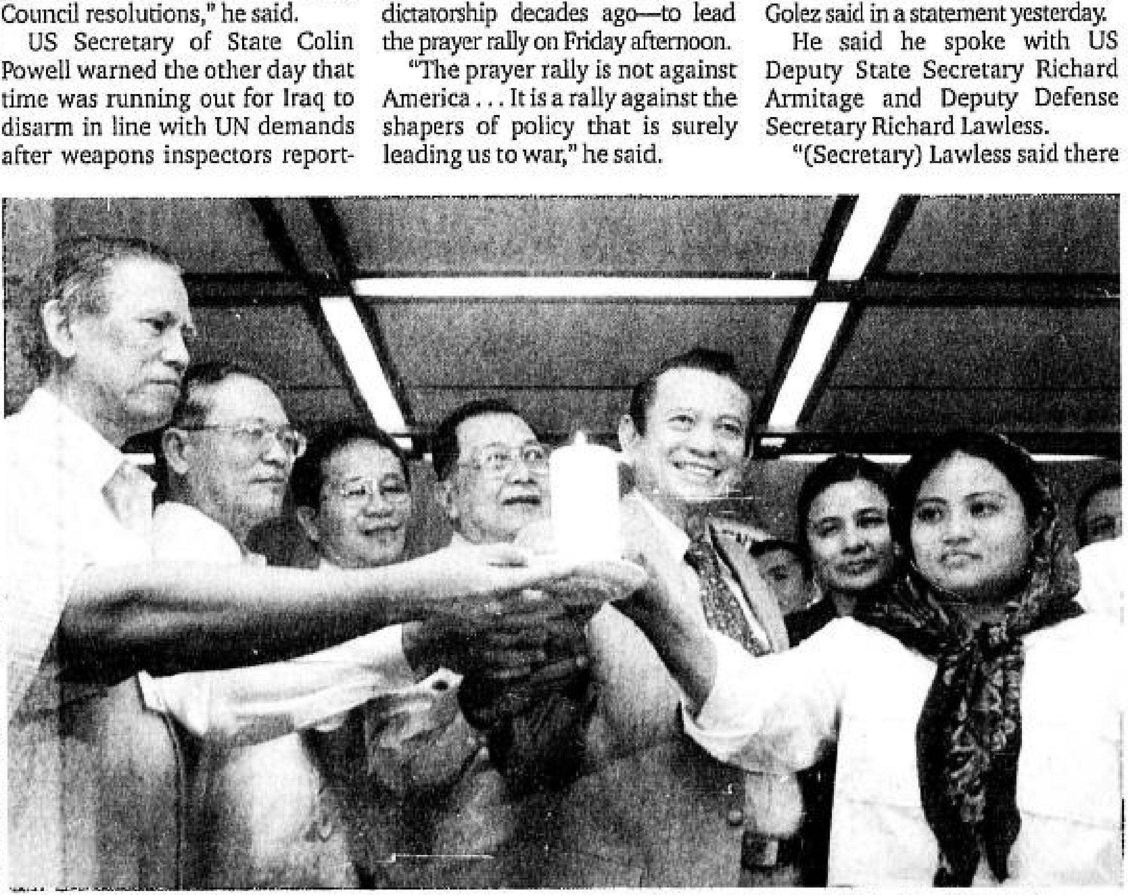
All petroleum players were also ordered to keep supplies of liquefied petroleum gas good for at least seven days.

The required stockpiles exclude imports still in transit to Philippine territory.

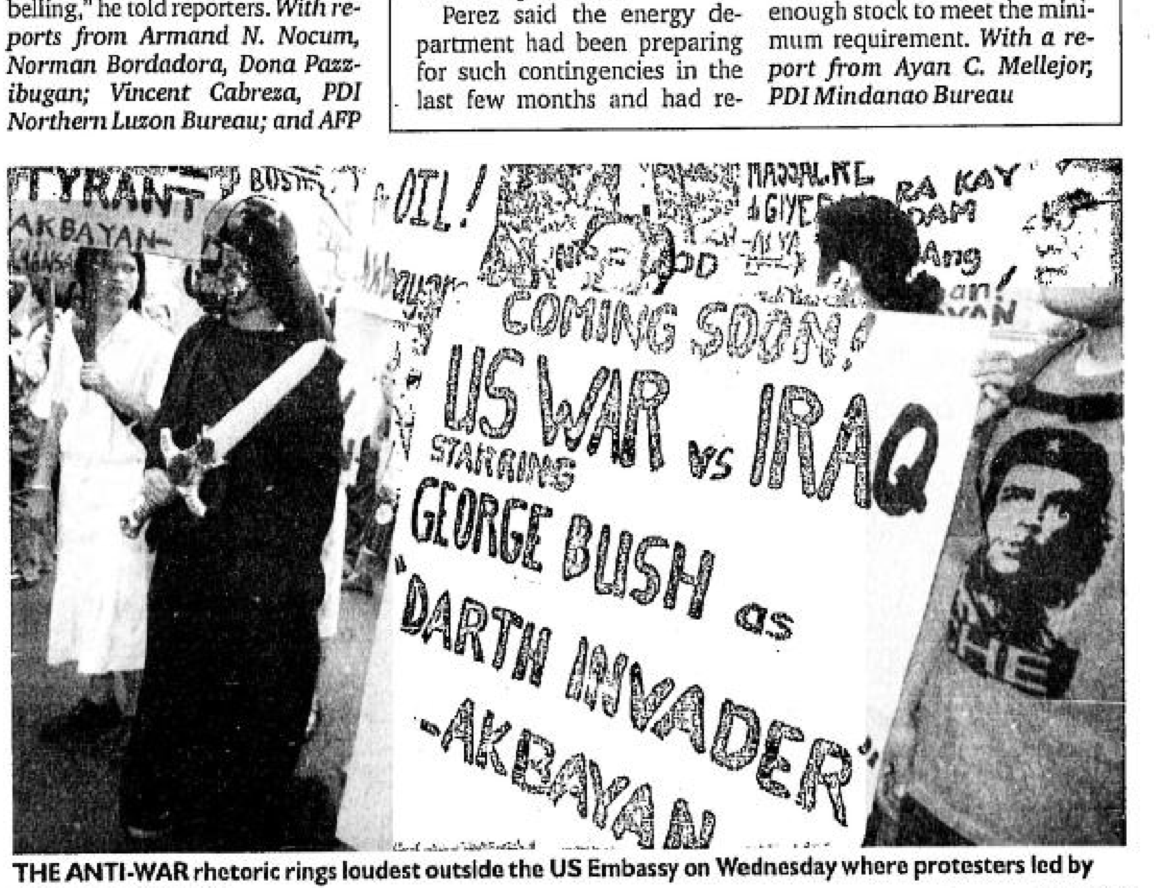
But the oil firms were given the option to decide on the mix of petroleum products their inventories would include.

Under the circular, Perez has the authority to determine how long the minimum inventory program should be in place.

Roberto Kanapi, general manager for external affairs of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., said in a telephone interview that the firm had enough stock to meet the minimum requirement. *With a report from Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



LIGHTING a candle for peace to symbolize opposition to a possible war on Iraq are Vice President Guingona and Church and Muslim leaders during a press conference at Guingona's office at the PICC. ERIK ARAZAS



THE ANTI-WAR rhetoric rings loudest outside the US Embassy on Wednesday where protesters led by Akbayan hold a rally. ERIK ARAZAS

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM

DAR Administrative Order
03 Series of 2003

SUBJECT: 2003 RULES FOR AGRARIAN LAW IMPLEMENTATION CASES

Pursuant to Sections 49 and 50 of Republic Act (RA) No. 6657, or the "Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1998" (CARL), and in order to foster a just, inexpensive, and expeditious determination of agrarian cases, the following are the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) rules governing the adjudication of cases involving Agrarian Law Implementation (ALI):

RULE I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

Section 1. *Title*. These Rules shall be known as the "2003 Rules of Procedure for ALI Cases".

Section 2. *ALI Cases*. These Rules shall govern all cases arising from or involving:

2.1 Classification and identification of landholdings for coverage under the agrarian reform program and the initial issuance of Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) and Emancipation Patents (EPs), including protests or oppositions thereto and petitions for lifting of such coverage;
2.2 Classification, identification, inclusion, exclusion, qualification, or disqualification of potential/actual farmer-beneficiaries;
2.3 Subdivision surveys of land under Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program(CARP);
2.4 Recall, or cancellation of provisional lease rentals, Certificates of Land Transfers (CLTs) and CARP Beneficiary Certificates (CBCs) in cases outside the purview of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 816, including the issuance, recall, or cancellation of Emancipation Patents (EPs) or Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) not yet registered with the Register of Deeds;
2.5 Exercise of the right of retention by landowner;
2.6 Application for exemption from coverage under Section 10 of RA 6657;
2.7 Application for exemption pursuant to Department of Justice (DOJ) Opinion No. 44 (1990);
2.8 Exclusion from CARP coverage of agricultural land used for livestock, swine, and poultry raising;
2.9 Cases of exemption/exclusion of fishpond and prawn farms from the coverage of CARP pursuant to RA 7881;
2.10 Issuance of Certificate of Exemption for land subject of Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS) and Compulsory Acquisition (CA) found unsuitable for agricultural purposes;
2.11 Application for conversion of agricultural land to residential, commercial, industrial, or other non agricultural uses and purposes including protests or oppositions thereto;
2.12 Determination of the rights of agrarian reform beneficiaries to homelots;
2.13 Disposition of excess area of the tenant's/ farmer-beneficiary's landholdings;
2.14 Increase in area of tillage of a tenant/farmer-beneficiary;
2.15 Conflict of claims in landed estates administered by DAR and its predecessors; and
2.16 Such other agrarian cases, disputes, matters or concerns referred to it by the Secretary of DAR.

Section 3. *DARAB Cases*. These rules shall not apply to cases falling within the exclusive original jurisdiction of the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) and its Regional or Provincial Agrarian Reform Adjudicators (RARAD or PARAD) which include:

3.1 The rights and obligations of persons, whether natural or juridical, engaged in the management, cultivation, and use of all agricultural lands covered by RA 6657 and other related agrarian laws;
3.2 The preliminary administrative determination of reasonable and just compensation of lands acquired under PD 27 and the CARP;
3.3 The annulment or cancellation of lease contracts or deeds of sale or their amendments involving lands under the administration and disposition of the DAR or Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP);
3.4 Those cases involving the ejectment and dispossession of tenants and/or leaseholders;
3.5 Those cases involving the sale, alienation, pre-emption, and redemption of agricultural lands under the coverage of the CARL or other agrarian laws;
3.6 Those involving the correction, partition, cancellation, secondary and subsequent issuances of CLOAs and EPs which are registered with the Land Registration Authority;
3.7 Those cases involving the review of leasehold rentals;
3.8 Those cases involving the collection of amortizations on payments of lands awarded under PD 27 (as amended), RA 3844 (as amended), and RA 6657 (as amended) and other related laws, decrees, orders, instructions, rules, and regulations, as well as payment for residential, commercial, and industrial lots within the settlement and resettlement areas under the administration and disposition of the DAR;
3.9 Those cases involving the annulment or rescission of lease contracts and deeds of sale, and the cancellation or amendment of titles pertaining to agricultural lands under the administration and disposition of the DAR and LBP; as well as EPs issued under PD 266, Homestead Patents, Free Patents, and miscellaneous sales patents to settlers in settlement and re-settlement areas under the administration and disposition of the DAR;
3.10 Those cases involving boundary disputes over lands under the administration and disposition of the DAR and the LBP, which are transferred, distributed, and/or sold to tenant-beneficiaries and are covered by deeds of sale, patents, and certificates of title;
3.11 Those cases involving the determination of title to agricultural lands where this issue is raised in an agrarian dispute by any of the parties or a third person in connection with the possession thereof for the purpose of preserving the tenure of the agricultural lessee or actual tenant-farmer or farmer-beneficiaries and effecting the ouster of the interloper or intruder in one and the same proceeding;
3.12 Those cases previously falling under the original and exclusive jurisdiction of the defunct Court of Agrarian Relations under Section 12 of PD 946 except those cases falling under the proper courts or other quasi-judicial bodies;and
3.13 Such other agrarian cases, disputes, matters or concerns referred to it by the Secretary of the DAR.

Section 4. *Construction*. In accordance with Section 50 of RA 6657, the DAR shall not be bound by technical rules of procedure and evidence but shall proceed to hear and decide all cases, disputes or controversies in a most expeditious manner, employing all reasonable means to ascertain the facts of every case in accordance with justice, equity and the merits of the case. In case of doubt, the deciding authority shall liberally construe or interpret these Rules in favor of carrying out the objectives of agrarian reform, to promote a just, expeditious, and inexpensive determination of agrarian cases. All references in these Rules in the masculine gender form (he/him/his) shall equally apply to the feminine gender form (she/her/hers) or group form (it/its/their)

Section 5. *Prejudicial Issue*. When an ALI case raises a prejudicial issue, such issue being a DARAB case under Section 3 hereof, the Secretary/Regional Director shall suspend the case pending resolution of the prejudicial question. Conversely, when a case pending before the DARAB or its Adjudicators raises a prejudicial issue, such issue being an ALI case under Section 2 hereof and falling within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Secretary/Regional Director, the Adjudicating Authority shall suspend the case pending the resolution of the prejudicial question in the proper forum.

Section 6. *Referral of cases*. When a party erroneously files a case under Section 2 hereof before the DARAB, the receiving official shall refer the case to the proper DAR office for appropriate action within five (5) working days after determination that said case is within the jurisdiction of the Secretary. Likewise, when a party erroneously files a case under Section 3 hereof before any office other than the DARAB or its adjudicators, the receiving official shall, within five (5) working days, refer the case to the DARAB or its adjudicators.

RULE II
JURISDICTION OVER ALI CASES

Section 7. *General Jurisdiction*. The Regional Director shall exercise primary jurisdiction over all agrarian law implementation cases except when a separate special rule vests primary jurisdiction in a different DAR office.

Section 8. *Jurisdiction over protests or petitions to lift coverage*. The Regional Director shall exercise primary jurisdiction over protests against CARP coverage or petitions to lift notice of coverage. If the ground for the protest or petition to lift CARP coverage is exemption or exclusion of the subject land from CARP coverage, the Regional Director shall either resolve the same if he has jurisdiction, or refer the matter to the Secretary if jurisdiction over the case belongs to the latter.

Section 9. *Jurisdiction over land use conversions and exemptions/exclusions from CARP coverage*. Separate special rules governing applications for land use conversion and exemption/exclusion from CARP coverage shall delineate the jurisdiction of the recommending and approving authorities thereunder.

Section 10. *Appellate Jurisdiction*. The Secretary shall exercise appellate jurisdiction over all ALI cases, and may delegate the resolution of appeals to any Undersecretary.

Section 11. *Jurisdiction over Flashpoint cases*. Any certification declaring a case as "flashpoint" in accordance with the criteria and procedure in DAR Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 13 (1997) shall not divest any authority from the DAR official for resolving the case. A flashpoint certification merely serves to accord utmost priority to the resolution of the case subject thereof.

RULE III
PROCEDURE

Section 12. *Applicability*. The procedures herein shall generally apply to all ALI cases except for specific situations such as applications for land conversion and exemption/exclusion from CARP coverage which shall be governed by the special procedures therefor.

Section 13. *Commencement of an Action*.

13.1 Without or prior to issuance of notice of CARP coverage – When the land in question has never been the subject of a notice of coverage, an ALI case involving said land shall commence upon filing of the initiatory pleading or application before the Regional Director or Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer (PARO).

  13.1.1. Commencement at the DAR Regional Office (DARRO) – The DARRO shall docket the case and transmit the case folder to the PARO within five (5) days from filing, with notice to all parties. Upon receipt, the PARO shall, within five (5) working days and with notice to all parties, transmit the case folder to the MARO who shall conduct the necessary mediation/conciliation proceedings.

  13.1.2. Commencement at the DAR Provincial Office (DARPO) – The PARO shall docket the case and submit a case brief to the Regional Director within five (5) working days, with notice to all parties. Within the same five (5) working-day period and with notice to all parties, the PARO shall transmit the case folder to the MARO who shall conduct the necessary mediation/conciliation proceedings.

13.2. After issuance of notice of coverage – Commencement shall be at the DAR Municipal Office (DARMO). When the applicant/petitioner commences the case at any other DAR office, the receiving office shall transmit the case folder to the DARMO or proper DAR office in accordance with the pertinent order and/or circular governing the subject matter. Only the real-party-in-interest may file a protest/opposition or petition to lift CARP coverage and may only do so within sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of the notice of coverage; a protesting party who receives the notice of coverage by newspaper publication shall file his protest/opposition/petition within sixty (60) calendar days from publication date; failure to file the same within the period shall merit outright dismissal of the case.

Section 14. *Forum Shopping*.

14.1. The applicant/petitioner shall certify under oath in the application or initiatory pleading, or its integral annex, a sworn certification that:

  14.1.1. He has not theretofore commenced any other action or proceeding involving the same land or issue in any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency;

  14.1.2. To the best of his knowledge, no such action or proceeding is pending in any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency;

  14.1.3. If there is any action or proceeding which is either pending or may have been terminated, he shall state the status thereof; and

  14.1.4. If he thereafter learns that a similar action or proceeding has been filed or is pending before any court, tribunal, or quasi-judicial agency, he undertakes to report that fact within five (5) days therefrom to the DAR office where the ALI case is pending.

14.2 Failure to file a certification of non-forum-shopping and/or subsequent discovery of commission of forum-shopping shall be grounds for summary dismissal of the ALI case. Dismissal for failure to file certification of non-forum-shopping shall be without prejudice to re-filing of the case. Dismissal on the ground of subsequent discovery of commission of forum-shopping shall be with prejudice and the applicant/petitioner shall be liable for costs, except in the following cases:

  14.2.1 When he thereafter learns that a similar action or proceeding has been filed or is pending before any court, tribunal, quasi-judicial agency, and he reported that fact within five (5) days therefrom to the DAR office where the ALI case is pending;

  14.2.2 The applicant/petitioner is a pauper litigant; and
  14.2.3. Where these Rules allow cross-referral between DARAB and ALI cases.

Section 15. *Pauper Litigant*. A party who is a farmer, agricultural lessee, share tenant, farm worker, actual tiller, occupant, collective or cooperative of the foregoing beneficiaries, or amortizing owner-cultivator, shall allege such fact in a sworn statement and shall thereafter benefit from the privileges for pauper litigants without need of further proof. He shall continue to enjoy such privileges in all levels of the proceedings until finality of the case.

Section 16. *Intervention*. No intervention shall be given due course unless the intervenor shows proof that he has a substantial right or interest in the case which he cannot adequately protect in another case. This notwithstanding, potential farmer beneficiaries have a substantial right, interest, and legal personality to intervene. No intervenor shall, however, be allowed to file any motion to postpone/extend/reset or any pleading which may in any way delay the case which he seeks to intervene in.

Section 17. *Effect on Process of Coverage*. The commencement of an ALI case, including applications for land use conversion/exemption/exclusion, affects the land acquisition and distribution process as follows:

17.1 *Application or Petition filed before the issuance of notice of CARP coverage*. The notice of coverage shall be held in abeyance until final resolution of the case.

17.2 *Application or petition filed within sixty calendar days from issuance of notice of CARP coverage*. The proper DAR office shall continue processing the claimfolder but not transmit the same to the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) for further processing, notwithstanding the pendency of the application. The Regional Director or PARO may suspend the claimfolder's processing if the MARO submits a report that the case is meritorious on the basis of the MARO's personal verification of the allegations therein; otherwise, the PARO shall process the claimfolder but not transmit the same to the LBP for further processing.

17.3. *Application or petition filed where claimfolder is pending with LBP* – If the application/petition or protest was filed while the claimfolder is pending with the LBP, or where the claimfolder has been forwarded by the PARO notwithstanding such application/petition or protest, the LBP shall continue processing the land compensation claim, except that the Certification of Deposit (COD) shall be issued to the PARO until the application/petition or protest is finally resolved.

Section 18. *Procedure*.

18.1. *Commencement*. Except for applications for land use conversion and exemption/exclusion from CARP coverage which shall follow separate special rules, an ALI case shall commence with the filing of the proper application or initiatory pleading at the DARMO/DARPO/DARRO. In all instances, the MARO shall notify all tenants, leaseholders, farmworkers, and occupants of the subject land of the initiation of the case. Proof of notice to all the persons above-mentioned shall form part of the records of the case.

18.2. After notifying all parties, the MARO and Barangay Agrarian Reform Committee (BARC) shall exert exhaustive efforts at mediation and conciliation to persuade the parties to arrive at an amicable settlement or compromise.

18.3. The issue of whether or not the land is subject to coverage under PD 27 or RA 6657 shall not be the subject of compromise.

18.4. If mediation/conciliation fails, the MARO shall, within five (5) working days from termination thereof, transmit the case folder to the PARO with a written report explaining the reasons for the mediation/conciliation's failure, furnishing all the parties with a copy of the written report.

18.5. *Investigation*. The PARO, or any Investigating Officer or Committee which he or the Regional Director may designate, shall conduct investigations and perform whatever is necessary to achieve a just, expeditious, and inexpensive disposition of the case.

18.6. *Record of proceedings*. The proceedings shall be recorded by a stenographer. In the absence of an available stenographer, the Investigating Officer shall make a written summary of the proceedings, including the substance of the evidence presented which shall be attested to by the parties or their counsel and shall form part of the records of the case. Should any party or counsel refuse to sign, the reason for such refusal shall be noted therein.

18.7 . *Ocular Inspection*.

  18.7.1. After giving all parties reasonable notice of the ocular inspection schedule, ocular inpection shall proceed with or without the presence of any party who refuses to cooperate.

  18.7.2. The ocular inspection team shall prepare an initial report which all attending parties and BARC representatives shall sign. If anyone refuses to sign, the ocular inspection team shall indicate the reason for such refusal in the initial report.

18.8. *Position Papers*. The investigating Officer may require the parties to simultaneously submit their respective position papers and replies thereto. Within thirty (30) days from due date of the last pleading (unless special rules provide for a different period), the Investigating Officer shall sign and submit his recommendation to the appropriate authority.

18.9. *Draft Decision*. At any time before the ALI case is decided, any party may submit a hard copy of a draft decision together with a diskette containing such draft written in any popular word processing program, furnishing a copy thereof to all parties.

18.10. *Decision*. Pursuant to Section 51 of RA 6657, which provides that "any case or controversy before it shall be decided within thirty (30) days after it is submitted for resolution", the appropriate authority shall promulgate its decision within thirty (30) days from receipt of the Investigating Officer's recommendation.

Section 19. *Power to summon witnesses and compel submission of documentary evidence*. The PARO and the RD shall have the power to summon witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, require submission of reports, and compel production of books and documents.

Section 20. *Cease and Desist Order*. In cases where any party may suffer grave or irreparable damage, or where the doing or continuance of certain acts will render the case moot and academic, or where there is a need to maintain peace and order and prevent injury or loss of life or property, the Secretary (or whoever the Secretary may designate) may, *motu propio* or at the instance of any party, issue a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) to prevent grave and irreparable damage while awaiting resolution of the case. The Regional Director may exercise the same authority for matters that are strictly within the confines of his territorial jurisdiction. In this regard, the issuing authority may request the assistance of law enforcement agencies to implement the (CDO).

Section 21. *Prohibition against restraining order or preliminary injunction*.

21.1. Pursuant to Section 55 of RA 6657, no court in the Philippines shall have jurisdiction to issue any restraining order or writ of preliminary injunction against the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) or any of its duly authorized or designated agencies, or the DAR, in any case, dispute or controversy arising from, necessary to, or in connection with the application, implementation, enforcement, or interpretation of RA 6657 and other pertinent laws on agrarian reform. Likewise, pursuant to Section 68 of RA 6657, no injunction, restraining order, prohibition or mandamus shall be issued by the lower courts against the DAR, Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Department of Justice in their implementation of the Program.

21.2. The DARAB or its Adjudicators shall have no authority to issue any restraining order or preliminary injunction against any Regional Director or DAR official carrying out the implementation of agrarian laws, except when the DAR Secretary refers the case to the DARAB.

Section 22. *Furnishing a copy of the decision*. The deciding authority shall furnish a copy of the decision, not only to the parties' counsel/s or representative/s, but also directly to the parties themselves as well as to the PARO, MARO, BARC, and all other DAR officials who took part in the case or who may take part in its execution or implementation.

Section 23. *Motion for Reconsideration*. A party may file only one (1) motion for reconsideration of the decision of the Regional Director, and may also do so only within a non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the decision, furnishing a copy of the motion to all other parties. The filing of the motion interrupts the running of the reglementary period within which to appeal. The Regional Director shall rule on the motion within thirty (30) days from its filing date.

23.1. If the motion for reconsideration is denied, the movant may perfect an appeal before the Secretary within only the remainder of said non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days but not less than five (5) calendar days.

23.2. If the motion for reconsideration is granted, resulting in the reversal of the original decision, the losing party may perfect an appeal before the Secretary within a full but non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the new decision.

Section 24. *Motion for Reconsideration of the decision or order of the Secretary*. In cases where the Secretary exercises exclusive original jurisdiction, a party may file only one (1) motion for reconsideration of the decision of the Secretary, and may do so only within a non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the decision, furnishing a copy of the motion to all other parties. The filing of the motion interrupts the running of the reglementary period within which to appeal.

24.1. If the motion for reconsideration is denied, the movant may perfect an appeal before the Office of the President within only the remainder of said non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days but not less than five (5) calendar days.

24.2. If the motion for reconsideration is granted, resulting in the reversal of the original decision, the losing party may perfect an appeal before the Office of the President within a full but non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the new decision.

RULE IV
APPEALS TO THE SECRETARY

Section 25. *Grounds*. No appeal shall be given due course unless the decision of the Regional Director is final, disposing of the case on the merits, and only on the following grounds:

25.1. Serious errors in the findings of the fact or conclusion of law which may cause grave and irreparable damage or injury to the appellant; and

25.2. Coercion, fraud, or clear graft and corruption in the issuance of a decision.

Section 26. *Caption*. The caption of all appeals, in addition to the standard lines indicating the hierarchy of authority (first line: "Republic of the Philippines"; second line: "Department of Agrarian Reform"; third line: "Office of the Secretary"), shall likewise specifically address appeals to the "Bureau of Agrarian Legal Assistance" or "BALA", and refer to the appealing party as the "appellant" and the adverse party the "appellee". The BALA shall assign a new docket number to each appeal which shall appear above the old docket number (enclosing the old docket number inside a parenthesis).

Section 27. *When to Appeal*. Appeals may be taken within fifteen (15) days from receipt of the adverse decision pursuant to Section 51 of RA 6657 which provides that "any order or ruling or decision shall be final after the lapse of fifteen (15) days from receipt of a copy thereof".

Section 28. *Where to Appeal*. Appeals from the decision of the Regional Director shall be made by filing in the same regional office which issued the adverse decision, a notice of appeal with proof of payment of the requisite appeal fee. Official cashiers of any DAR office may receive payment of the requisite appeal fee. Non-perfection of the appeal within the reglementary period merits dismissal of the appeal.

Section 29. *Appeal Pleadings*. The appellant shall submit an appeal brief with the BALA within ten (10) days from perfection of the appeal, furnishing a copy thereof to the adverse party and the Regional Director. The appellee may submit a comment (not motion to dismiss) within ten (10) days from receipt of the appeal brief, furnishing a copy thereof to the appellant and the Regional Director. Within fifteen (15) days from filing of the appellee's comment, the BALA director shall issue a preliminary order stating either that:

29.1. The pleadings on record are sufficient for deciding the appeal and henceforth the deciding authority shall promulgate its decision; or.

29.2. The pleadings on record are insufficient for a proper determination of the issues raised and so the parties shall simultaneously file their respective appeal memorandum within ten (10) days from receipt of the order to do so; or

29.3. The pleadings on record need further clarification and the conduct of a clarificatory hearing is necessary. Ten (10) days after the termination of the said hearing thereof, the BALA Director may order the parties to simultaneously file their respective appeal memorandum.

At any time before the ALI case is decided, any party may submit a hard copy of a draft decision with a diskette containing such draft written in any popular word-processing program, furnishing a copy thereof to all parties.

Upon submission of sufficient pleadings, the BALA Director shall submit his recommendations to the deciding authority.

Section 30. *Record Transmittal*. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the DARRO of origin shall arrange each document therein in chronological order according to date of receipt (the first-received document in the first page, so on and so forth, until the last-received document in the last page); inscribe a page number (by hand or with a paginating device) on each page and every page; and thereafter the responsible officer at the DARRO shall affix his initials on each and every page. When for special reasons a particular document in the records requires that it be free from any form of marking, the pagination and affixing of initials shall be made only upon photocopies thereof; the originals shall be in separate envelopes while photocopies thereof shall form part of the main *rollo* folder. The DARRO shall prepare a table of contents, which shall be ahead of the first page of the records, and attach a photocopy of the appeal fee receipt in front of the table of contents. Within ten (10) days from perfection of the appeal, the DARRO shall transmit the records and all its accompanying envelopes to the BALA. To enforce compliance with this Section, the BALA Director may, after due investigation, recommend disciplinary action against the erring DARRO official, including the Regional Director when necessary.

Section 31. *Appeal Withdrawal*. An appeal may be withdrawn by filing with the BALA a motion to withdraw appeal at any time prior to the promulgation of the appellate decision, except when the withdrawal is prejudicial to public interest. The withdrawal may take effect only after the Secretary issues an order approving the motion to withdraw.

RULE V
APPEALS FROM THE SECRETARY

Section 32. *Motion for Reconsiderartion*. A party may file only one (1) motion for reconsideration of the decision of the Secretary or deciding authority, and may do so only within a non-extendible period of fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the Secretary's decision, furnishing a copy of the motion to all other parties. The filing of the motion interrupts the running of the reglementary period within which to appeal. Upon receipt of the resolution on the motion for reconsideration, the losing party may elevate the matter to the Office of the President (OP).

Section 33. *Appeal*. Appeals from the decision of the Secretary may be taken to the OP within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof. The filing of an appeal within the proper period stays execution of the subject decision, unless the OP orders immediate execution of the DAR decision upon such terms and conditions that are just and reasonable, pursuant to Section 4 of OP Administrative Order (AO) No. 18 dated 12 February 1987, or the applicable rule.

Section 34. *Judicial Review*. In cases where the appellant opts to elevate his appeal directly to a judicial forum, the governing procedure shall be the pertinent provisions of the Rules of Court, until and unless the judicial forum dismisses the appeal for failure to exhaust administrative remedies.

RULE VI
FINALITY AND EXECUTION

Section 35. *Finality*. Final orders/decisions/resolutions shall become final and executory after all parties have received an official copy thereof; after the lapse of fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of receipt by the last recipient of an official copy thereof, and there is no motion for reconsiderarion nor appeal therefrom.

Section 36. *Execution*. Execution shall issue automatically as a matter of course upon finality of the case. The Regional Director shall prepare the necessary certificate of finality within five (5) days from date of finality of a case. For cases appealed to the Secretary that attained finality thereat, the BALA Director shall prepare the necessary certificate of finality within five (5) days from the date of finality. Upon completion of the certificate of finality, the Regional Director or deciding authority may, upon motion or *motu propio*, issue a writ of execution ordering the MARO or appropriate DAR official to enforce the final order/decision/resolution. For this purpose, the MARO or appropriate DAR official may seek assistance from law enforcement agencies.

RULE VII
FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 37. *Case records are public documents*. Subject to the provisions of DAR Memorandum Circular No. 25, Series of 1995, records of a case are public documents and all parties, their representatives, and the general public may request to copy the same or any portion thereof except for the documents stated in said Memorandum Circular from its official custodian during reasonable office hours, upon payment of reasonable reproduction costs and certification fees.

Section 38. *Repealing Clause*. This Order modifies or repeals DAR-AO-6-2000 and all other issuances or portions thereof that are inconsistent herewith.

Section 39. *Separability Clause*. Any judicial pronouncement declaring as unconstitutional any provision of this Order shall not affect the validity of the other provisions herein.

Section 40. *Effectivity Clause*. This Order shall take effect ten (10) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, pursuant to Section 49 of RA 6657.

Diliman, Quezon City, 16 January 2003.

HERNANI A. BRAGANZA

Inquirer-January 29, 2003

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SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Al S. Mendoza ◉ Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

Quad Challenge slated Feb. 6

THE ANNUAL U.P. High, Prep. Elementary and Integrated School Alumni Golf Tournament, better known as the U.P. Quad Challenge, will be held at Wack Wack West on Feb. 6. This year's tournament will be hosted by the UP High Class of '78 and is for the benefit of its scholarship fund. Tee-off time is from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

PBA supports gov't campaign to cleanse league of 'Fil-shams'

By June Navarro

THE EFFORTS of the government to purge the Philippine Basketball Association of bogus Fil-foreign cagers got the complete backing of the league's board of governors and PBA Commissioner Noli Eala.

"As long as it is based on solid concrete evidence, we support the moves of the government to cleanse the ranks of the PBA," said Eala during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn Manila.

But while the PBA welcomes the initiative of the Senate to get rid of the alleged "Fil-shams," Eala said the government should resort to legal means on the cancellation of their documents to ensure the interests of the league are kept intact.

The Senate has singled out Asi Taulava of Talk N Text and added four other Fil-foreign players (Eric Menk, Chris Jackson, James Wallkvist and Nic Belasco) on the deportation list for allegedly presenting fraudulent documents before the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation and the Department of Justice.

Some 20 other Fil-fors are expected to be questioned by the Senate in the coming weeks.

If proven guilty of falsifying their citizenship papers, sources said the Fil-fors will be jailed at the BID for six months at the most before being deported to their country of origin.

"We don't have the capacity to judge the documents that the Fil-fors have submitted and we have always presumed that all of them are eligible to play," said Eala.

The most recent Senate inquiry on the Fil-fors saw the all-local PBA players' association calling for the immediate deportation of the foreign cagers, who either failed to produce the necessary documents or present the authentic papers to prove their Filipino lineage.

Meanwhile, the PBA Board of Governors has reduced the import salary cap and the bonus scheme for foreign players down to 30 percent. From as much as $20,000 a month, an import will now have to make do with a $14,000 maximum salary.

POC talks today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic Committee will hold its first general assembly for the year at noon today with the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games in December on top of its agenda.

The size of delegation and the manner of athletes' selection will be tackled by the Olympic body aside from the differences in some national sports associations particularly the cycling association.

Tennis association president Buddy Andrada is expected to reiterate his proposal to have four major committees which will determine who makes the national delegation in SEA Games slated Dec. 5-15.

Based on Andrada's proposal, there will be separate committees for ball and racket sports, measurable sports, subjective sports and other categories.

Each committee, according to the plan, will be composed of people knowledgeable of that particular sporting group.

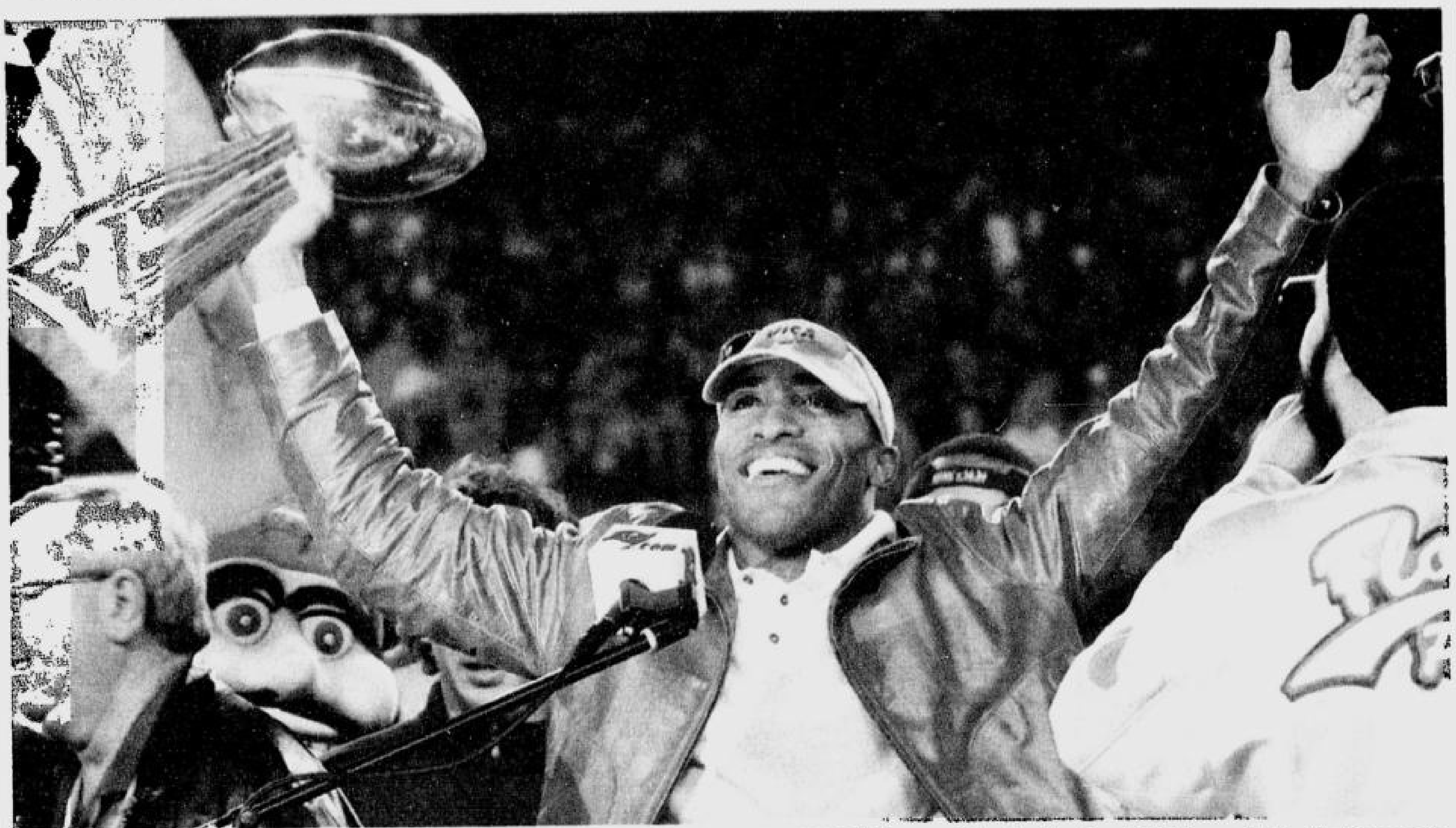
The plan will allow the POC to take complete control of the athlete selection and do away with the Task Force which the Olympic body traditionally shares with the Philippine Sports Commission during SEA Games, Asian Games and the Olympics.

Under the set-up, the PSC will be relegated to merely funding the training, exposure and purchase of equipment for the national team training for the SEAG.

POC president Celso Dayrit said the POC executive council is still studying Andrada's proposal.

Meanwhile, the POC's decision on the two factions in the cycling association is also expected to come out today.

The cycling factions are anxious to resolve the issue after plans to revive the Tour ng Pilipinas came out.



TAMPA Bay Buccaneers' Ronde Barber waves the Vince Lombardi Trophy during a Super Bowl XXXVII victory celebration Monday night in Tampa, Florida. The Buccaneers won their first ever Super Bowl, defeating the Oakland Raiders, 48-21, Sunday in San Diego.
AP

Thousands welcome Buccaneers home

TAMPA, Florida--Thousands of fans of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers welcomed home the Super Bowl champions on Monday at both the airport and the team's stadium.

The players, coaches and team officials arrived at the airport to loud cheers and were whisked off to a rally at the stadium in front of 40,000 screaming fans.

The Buccaneers beat the Oakland Raiders 48-21 in Sunday's Super Bowl in San Diego, California.

"It's challenging to see if we could do it on one day notice," said Julie Harris, who coordinated the event.

One Buccaneer who did not make the return trip to Tampa was quarterback Brad Johnson.

Johnson, wife Nikki, and their infant son Max, rode in an open convertible in a Disneyland parade on Monday. He was scheduled to appear on a national TV talk show on Monday.

When the Bucs landed, four fire trucks saluted the team by shooting water in arcs over the top of the jumbo jet.

Hundreds of fans lined up in front of Raymond James Stadium — some as early as two a.m. on Monday.

Pride Day

"I plan on getting a hat and a T-shirt, because we're probably going to have a Buccaneers Pride Day at the school," said high school teacher Mike Flynn.

"Go Bucs!" and "27 Years—The Wait Is Over" were two hand-written signs seen at the Welcome Home Rally.

Bucs head coach Jon Gruden was the first person out of the eight vehicles when they arrived at the stadium.

"All we can say is we love you Tampa," said Gruden.

Said defensive back Ronde Barber, "I did not expect so many people. I'm amazed, I'm really amazed." Police said there were no reports of violence or arrests connected to the celebrations. About two dozen people were booked for drink driving offences after the game.

Meanwhile, all week Jon Gruden insisted he wasn't worth the two first round picks, two second round selections and $8 million the Tampa Bay Buccaneers paid to pry him away from the clutches of Oakland Raider owner Al Davis.

On Monday morning it seemed like a steal as Tampa Bay celebrated its first ever Super Bowl title and the Raider Nation crawled back to their "Black Hole", still reeling from Oakland's humiliating 48-21 defeat in the NFL's championship game.

In the aftermath of the lopsided victory, Bucs' owner Malcolm Glazer was being praised as visionary while 39-year-old Gruden -- the youngest coach to ever win a Super Bowl -- was being hailed as a genius ready to assume his place alongside coaching greats like Tom Landry and Vince Lombardi.

Gruden's new celebrity status was confirmed when the coach arrived for his post-Super Bowl news conference in a presidential-style motorcade complete with police escort and burly security guards.

But almost lost in the Super Bowl hoopla was the fact that even before Gruden arrived in Florida, the Bucs had developed into a team poised for great things.

Likeable coach

Under likeable coach Tony Dungy the Buccaneers established themselves as contenders but could never quite realize their full potential, crashing out in the first round of the playoffs the previous three seasons.

The fiery Gruden, it seems, was the missing piece to the Bucs' Super Bowl puzzle, the inspirational catalyst to an NFL title.

"I really can't describe some of the things that went through me emotionally last night," said Gruden, dubbed "Chucky" after the evil doll in the Childs Play horror movies because of his scowling expressions.

"I just tried to concentrate on the game itself and it was difficult.

"When I got to Tampa it was a very interesting situation. I didn't know anybody in the building ... and I realized we had a challenge to succeed a great coach."

Next season Gruden will continue to build the team in his image but faces several challenges in professional sports' most competitively balanced league.

No team has won back-to-back Super Bowls since the Denver Broncos lifted titles in 1998 and 1999 and this season neither the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots nor the St Louis Rams, who they beat in last year's showpiece, even made the playoffs. *AP, AFP*

Garnett sparkles as Wolves subdue Duncan-led Spurs

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota--In a battle of the NBA Western Conference's All-Star forwards, Kevin Garnett clearly got the better of Tim Duncan.

Garnett totalled a season high-tying 34 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists as the Minnesota Timberwolves extended their best winning streak of the season to six games with a 106-95 triumph over the San Antonio Spurs on Monday.

"We had a lot of energy tonight," Garnett said. "And I think the winning streak helped get us energized coming into the game."

Duncan, who was named the Western Conference Player of the Week earlier Monday, had 17 points and 10 rebounds but shot just 5-of-17 and allowed Garnett to connect on 14-of-19 attempts.

"KG was fabulous tonight," Minnesota coach Flip Saunders said. "He got in a situation where he thought he couldn't miss." "(Garnett) had a great game tonight," Duncan said. "He shot the ball incredibly. He was hitting his fadeaway. He led them. He's great."

Wally Szczerbiak scored 17 points and Kendall Gill added 12 for the Timberwolves, who led by as many as 20 points midway through the fourth quarter before the Spurs made a late run.

Meanwhile, Reggie Miller sank a 3-pointer with 1:10 remaining to put Indiana ahead, before adding a layup in the final 41 seconds of the Pacers' 102-95 victory over the Miami Heat.

Indiana forward Ron Artest had two confrontations with Heat coach Pat Riley, and he made an obscene gesture from center court as the Pacers rallied in the final period. The Heat lost after leading at the start of the fourth quarter for the eighth time.

Miller scored 21 points to lead the Pacers, who won their fourth in a row. Caron Butler had 22 points for Miami.

COMPLETE RESULTS

Washington 98, Phoenix 93; Cleveland 104, LA Clippers 100; Indiana 102, Miami 95; Minnesota 106, San Antonio 95; Houston 100, Memphis 95; Milwaukee 108, New Orleans 93; New Jersey 92, Denver 66. *AFP*

JAMES soaring for a dunk.
INTERNET PHOTO

HS cage phenom cleared

COLUMBUS, Ohio--American schoolboy phenom LeBron James has been cleared of any wrongdoing by the Ohio High School Athletic Association for accepting a sports utility vehicle as a gift.

The OHSAA concluded a two-week investigation Monday and said James did not violate any state bylaws by accepting the Hummer H2 vehicle, which has a base retail price of 50,000 dollars.

James' mother, Gloria, said she obtained a bank loan to buy the SUV for her son's 18th birthday and provided financial information to the OHSAA for its investigation.

James plays for St. Vincent-St. Mary High School and is expected to be the first pick in the June National Basketball Association draft.

Had James been guilty of a violation, he would have been declared ineligible and St. Vincent-St. Mary would have forfeited its games from the time James accepted the SUV. *AFP*

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - New York vs Atlanta, 8:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports
GOLF: PGA Phoenix Open, 2 p.m. (r), Star Sports
POOL: 2002 Women's Tournament of Champions, 10:30 a.m. (r), ESPN
Rack 'Em Up 2, 1 p.m. and 9 p.m. (r), Star Sports
World Pool League 2002, 1 p.m. (r), ESPN
Mosconi Cup 2002, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. (r), ESPN
World Pool Masters 2002, 8:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

AN URGENT APPEAL TO MAYOR ATIENZA AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF MANILA

We are committed to comply with the agreements

Our commitment remains firm to comply with the agreements as stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) entered into by and among the Department of Energy, the City of Manila, Caltex (Philippines), Inc., Petron Corporation and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and subsequently ratified by the City Council of Manila.

a. The immediate removal/decommissioning process involving 28 tanks

1. Two LPG spheres and 12 vertical tanks have been decommissioned and dismantled. This represents 50 percent compliance.
2. The last LPG sphere will be decommissioned by the end of February.
3. A firm schedule for the removal/decommissioning of the remaining tanks is in place for immediate implementation.

b. The development of a "safety and green buffer zone"

1. Phase 1 (Shell side) of the green safety buffer zone is cleared and ready for earthworks and greening.
2. Construction has began on the access road and buffer zone on the Petron side.
3. In coordination with urban planner Palafox Associates, a development plan is being finalized for the immediate opening and public use of major portions of the envisioned Pandacan Linear Park.

c. The integration of operations of the Pandacan terminals

A basic agreement is now in place for the establishment of joint venture company to integrate the operations of the three Pandacan terminals. A detailed engineering plan has likewise been completed by CSPL Philippines, Inc., the local affiliate of Chiyoda Singapore (PTE) Limited. With this agreement and engineering plan, the phase down process can now advance at a much faster pace.

We appeal for understanding

Our sincere and serious efforts to fully comply with all the commitments embodied in the MoU are subject to constraints for which we are appealing for understanding:

1. The scaling down of operations has to be undertaken without interrupting the flow of petroleum products to Manila and a large part of Luzon. Should the removal of tanks have proceeded in a shorter time, supply shortages of petroleum products would have been experienced.

2. Operating the terminal as a common facility required the prior resolution of complex issues, among them ownership and operatorship.

3. There are strict technical and operating procedures in accordance with international standards that have to be done in the decommissioning and dismantling of tanks.

4. The integration of our operations requires time as engineering designs and commercial arrangements are finalized. The reduction in the number of oil storage tanks, for instance, requires the design and installation of new pipelines and pump systems that will have to be custom-built and imported.

We share with you a common concern

1. While an independent international risk consultancy firm has confirmed the high level of safety and security at the Pandacan terminals, we are committed to enhance this further with the development and maintenance of safety and green buffer zones.

2. The plans being finalized in coordination with Palafox Associates is in support of the development of the City of Manila as per your "Buhayin ang Maynila" program.

We recognize the initiative and effort of the City Mayor and the City Council to strike a balance between the safety and security concerns of Pandacan residents and the stable and uninterrupted supply of petroleum products for the country.

We therefore reiterate our commitment to ensure that this model of cooperation between the local government and private sector is successfully achieved.

CALTEX PETRON

DHL-NGAP OPEN

2 chip-ins give Dumandan early lead

CANLUBANG—Marvin Dumandan made two spectacular chip-ins – one for eagle, the other for birdie – to assemble a four-under par 68 and lead at the start of the 8th DHL-NGAP Open amateur golf championship at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club North course.

Dumandan, a 22-year-old Davao native who had a short stint with the national team two years ago, birdied three of his first four holes and finished just as hot with a chip-in for eagle at the par-5 14th hole and another birdie from just off the green at the last.

That gave the former caddie from the Apo Golf Club now based at the Riviera a two-shot lead over veteran Abe Rosal in this 72-hole event presented by DHL Worldwide Express and the WWW Express.

Rosal outduelled national champion Jerome Delariarte and teenage sensation Tonton Asistio to finish with a 70.

Running third were Juvic Pagunsan, the reigning SEA Games champion who won this event in 2001, and fellow Canlubang stalwart Jun Bernis with 71s.

Delariarte was at 72 in the company of Jong Laput.

Heading the group at 73 was Asistio, the 13-year-old jungolf standout who more than held his own in the company of Delariarte and Rosal by going two-under over his last seven holes. Also with the same score were Boyet Zaragoza and Lee Seong Ki.

DHL chair and NGAP president Rod Feliciano, DHL Worldwide Express country manager Charles Brewer, WWW Express president Joe Feliciano, DHL National Global Customer Logistics Solution manager Chris Honor, NGAP vice president Vice Admiral Luisito Fernandez and Canlubang general manager Oscar Papa did the ceremonial drives.

Competition in the ladies and seniors division start today.

Casas' 64 sets Del Monte afire

DEL MONTE, Bukidnon—The Cassius Casas of a recent past resurfaced yesterday.

Keeping his focus despite finishing second twice the past two weeks, Casas set the Del Monte course afire with an 8-under-par 64 to post a 4-stroke lead in the opening round of the First Gentleman's Professional Golf Circuit ninth leg presented by San Miguel Beer.

There was hardly any room for error for one of local golf's high-profile players as Casas hit 17 greens in regulation and never missed a fairway.

His explosive start of eight birdies and no bogey more than made up for the absence of homegrown hero Frankie Miñoza, who was seen practicing on the course on Monday but couldn't join the field due to a previous commitment in Manila.

A 15-foot birdie on the 18th capped a glorious day for the 36-year-old Casas, who made a front-nine 31 behind a cluster of three birdies from the fourth and picked up three more in his homeward trip at the tree-lined layout.

That 64 was so far the best score this season, almost four months after the revival of the circuit made possible by the First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, Inc. with the full support of San Miguel Beer.

There were also 17 players who broke par, another season high which can be an indication of a week of superb scoring in the culmination of the Mindanao swing of the circuit.

Rey Pagunsan, the former amateur hotshot returning to the local tour after a two-year campaign in Japan, was tied with three others for second place. Also scoring 68s were Joselito Rempojo, Orland Sumcad and Elmer Salvador.

Rodrigo Cuello was all alone at 69 while the group at 70 included Robert Pactolerin, Carito Villaroman, Edwin Sanchez, Richard Sinfuego, Vic Santia and Edwin Estrera.

New Order of Merit leader Mars Pucay, his bid for a third consecutive title suddenly imperiled by Casas' surge, finished the opening round seven shots behind after a 71. He was joined in that figure by Noli Kempis, Roger Antonio, Rodolfo Cuello, Ricky Marcelo and amateur Romeo Jaraula.

Jong Arcano

1st round scores:

64 – C. Casas (31-33)

68 – J. Rempojo (36-32), R. Pagunsan(35-33), O. Sumcad (35-33) E. Salvador (33-35)

69 – R. Cuello (33-36)

70 – R. Pactolerin (35-35), C. Villaroman (35-35), E. Sanchez (34-36). R. Sinfuego (34-36), V. Santia (34-36), E. Estrera (33-37),

71 – M. Pucay (36-35), N. Kempis (36-35), R. Antonio (35-36), Ro. Cuello (35-36), R. Marcelo (34-37), R. Jaraula (33-38)

72 – D. delos Santos (38-34), E. Arcillas (37-35), M. Manubay (36-36), J. Opaco (am) (35-37), R. Bisera (35-37)

CASAS: Explosive start. PDI PHOTO

Bill Shaw golf stakes luxury car

A TOYOTA Camry, two Mitsubishi Lancer GLS 1600s, a Kymco DJ50 motorbike and a Yamaha cart make up the grand package of hole-in-one prizes worth at least P2 million for the 14th annual Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Classic, the member-guest invitational of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club presented by Samsung, this coming Friday and Saturday (Jan. 31-Feb. 1).

The Toyota Otis-sponsored Camry will be up for grabs on the 16th hole of the east course, the Lancers will be on No. 8 of the east and No. 11 of the west, the Kymco bike on west No. 8 and the Yamaha golf cart of Kart Plaza Manufacturing will be at stake on west No. 3.

A maximum field of 200 teams will be disputing the overall title currently held by the father-and-son pair of Angel and Robert Concepcion in the 36-hole event backed by Golforce, Custom Clubmakers and Unilever Philippines as major sponsors.

Tonici Tuason, chair of the sports and games committee handling the Bill Shaw preparations, said that there will be a bounty of prizes to be won both in the tournament and the raffle during the awarding ceremonies on Saturday at the poolside.

La Salle GH alumni tilt

ACTIVITIES for the 2003 La Salle Green Hills Alumni Association (LSGHAA)-"Show Me You're Verde" grand homecoming on Feb. 1 will be kicked off by the LSGHAA "11th Drive For A Cause" golf tournament Friday at the Legends Course of the Southwoods Golf and Country Club.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, a graduate of La Salle Zobel and Philadelphia, will hit the ceremonial ball together with tournament chair Peng Perez de Tagle, tournament director Ferdie Atendido, and 2003 grand homecoming chair Henry Atayde.

Newly appointed PSC Commissioner Bong de Luna, runner-up in the 2000 edition, LSGH golf coach and teaching pro Buddy de Joya, and past champions Boy Blue Ocampo, Benjie Sumulong, Jun Cedo and Raffy Garcia are also expected to show their wares.

De Guzman heads CCC Southern Ladies entries

DEFENDING champion Lina de Guzman leads the hunt for honors as well as gathering of past titlists when the Southern Ladies Open holds its ruby anniversary edition from Feb. 5 to 7 at the Cebu Country Club course.

De Guzman ruled last year's tournament to add to the championships she won in 1989 and 1993, joining an elite list of three-time winners of the storied event that include Sylvia Torres, Sonia Tugot and Grace Ebalde.

Her title-retention campaign is also expected to be a special time for the Southern Ladies, whose roll of champions reads like a who's who in women's golf–all of the past winners contributing to make the event one of the most prestigious in the country.

``Our 40th year is a good time as any to look back at our past," said Alice Andrada, treasurer of the National Golf Association of the Philippines which is organizing the event in cooperation with Cebu Country Club.

``So on our ruby anniversary we would like to invite the women who have contributed to the success of this event to join us in celebrating this milestone," Andrada added.

From the time the late Dominga Capati ruled the inaugural staging in 1964, the Southern Ladies has produced a long line of worthy champions that include LPGA campaigner Jennifer Rosales, Mary Grace Estuesta, Yvette De Leon and Aileen Chua.

Even the two women expected to crowd De Guzman in this year's edition have titles tucked under their belts: 2003 RP Ladies champion Heidi Chua ruled the 2000 and 2001 editions while Carmelette Villaroman is the 1999 winner.

They now head a field that is reaching record proportions for this year's event sponsored by Philippine Airlines, Philippine Sports Commission, DHL Worldwide Express, Marriott Hotel, Petron, San Miguel Corporation, Mizuno, Hans Brumann Jewelry, WG&A Superferry, Gopez Corporation, Directories Phils Inc.-The Yellow Pages, Hidden Spring and Perrier Inc. and Mitsubishi Motors.

This early, several clubs have already confirmed the participation of their entries, among them Alabang Golf Club, Canlubang, Wack Wack, Manila Southwoods, Philippine Navy, Riviera GC, Aguinaldo GC, Cebu CC, Bacolod GC, Negros Occidental GC, Del Monte, Pueblo de Oro and Iligan GC.

Mutual trust coated Welcoat victory

By Dennis U. Eroa

TRUST coach Leo Austria to trust his players.

Austria, whose coaching savvy propelled Welcoat back on top of the basketball ladder, said it wasn't just talent which enabled the Paintmasters to annex their fifth PBL plum at the expense of Dazz.

Not all talented teams win championships," said the 44-year-old Austria, who in 1985 copped the rookie of the year award in the PBA. The proud son of Quezon Province now boasts a collection of three PBL titles, plus the 1998 PBL Vis-Min Cup.

Austria's right. The story of local basketball is laced with misses and near misses. Remember Sta. Lucia Realty's gigantic upset over Lagerlite, the virtual national team, in the then PABL during the '80s? Or Ana/Dr. J's victory over Tanduay in the Centennial Cup?

The most recent, of course, was Coca Cola's stunning triumph in the PBA All-Filipino Cup over teams which paraded stronger rosters.

AUSTRIA: Communication lines are always open. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

"Because I trust my players that they will give their best, I also gain their trust which is very important in winning titles," said Austria. "Communication lines are always open."

Austria said there's no need to give his veterans (Ariel Capus, Rommel Adducul, Eddie Laure) tongue-lashing if they didn't follow instructions.

"I'm proud to say that Adducul and company didn't act as if they are superstars. They value teamwork and they listen to the coaching staff. They are respected by the team," said Austria.

Unlike others, Austria had no problems giving playing minutes to his players, who were groping for form.

"As a former player, I knew the importance of building confidence by giving playing minutes. I knew my players so much that I trusted them to sizzle during crunch time," said Austria, who still plays pickup games against former pros to keep fit and learn ``situations."

While Dazz mentor Junel Baculi relentlessly shuffled his men to find the winning formula, Austria kept his faith on starters Adducul, Laure, Capus, Paul Artadi and Ronald Tubid.

He also pulled an ace in Dennis Miranda, whose ability to read Dazz's plays proved crucial. "I noticed that during practice, Miranda was always focused," Austria said.

Defense, stressed Austria, spelled the difference in Welcoat's 3-0 win in the series. Known for his tremendous work ethics, Austria was able to decipher Baculi's set plays, using variations of the man-to-man and full-court press.

"We were a step ahead," said Austria.

Few knew that it was coach Ron Jacobs who inspired Austria to learn the rudiments of coaching.

"I learned a lot from coach Ron when I played for the national team in 1982. I like his styles," Austria said.

"I also read books which tend to confirm the Jacobs philosophy."

Mother of 3 sinks 4 aces

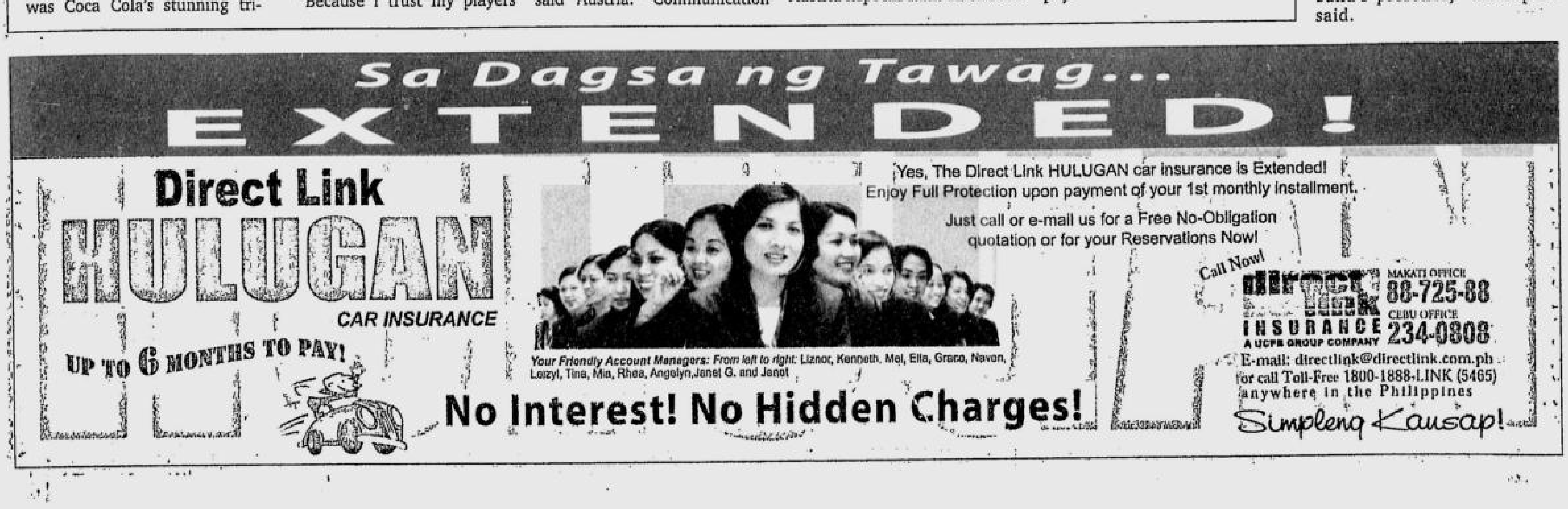
SINGAPORE—A Singapore mother of three has defied the odds to score two holes-in-one in a month — and she has done it twice, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

Christine Keung made her first hole-in-one on Oct. 5 and her second on Oct. 20, the Straits Times newspaper said. She repeated the feat in December, with two more aces on Dec. 7 and Dec. 27, the report said.

"I can't believe it," Keung, who is in her 40s, was quoted as saying.

The shy golfer didn't want to draw attention to herself, but the news trickled out because her fellow golf club members couldn't stop talking about her, the newspaper said.

Keung, who has a handicap of 22 and plays twice a week with her civil servant husband, said her prowess on the links was due to "99 percent luck and 1 percent my husband's presence," the report said.



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Aguilar a strong 2nd in Dubai tilt

CALTEX-REVTEX-KTM star rider Glenn Aguilar weathered the hot conditions and the desert course as he placed second behind an Australian daredevil on Sunday in the 2003 FIM (Federacion Internationale de Motorcyclisme) Motocross Continental Championship in Dubai.

Aguilar, rated No. 3 in the Asian standings, became Asia's best-ranked rider, at least for a day, as he finished the morning and afternoon heats second behind eventual champion Dean Taylor.

In his afternoon ride, Aguilar even gave the Australian a big scare as he finished only 12 seconds behind.

The six-time national rider of the year actually took home two gold-plated trophies--one for his runner-up finish, and the other for the Best Jump award.

"It's my first time to race in such a sandy, hot course, so I used the first race as my adjustment stage. I settled down in the afternoon and I even threatened Taylor," said Aguilar, who is also supported by Dreambikes, Oakley, Pro Grip and HJC Helmets.

The second leg of the FIM series golf to Malaysia in April.

His Caltex partner Bebet dela Cruz did not finish the race after suffering from an engine breakdown in the one-day event participated in by the best riders from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, Macau, Singapore and the middle east nations.

AGUILAR: Barely loses to an Australian daredevil.

PDI PHOTO

"Our organization is very proud of this achievement, proving that Aguilar is now one of the best, if not the best motocross rider in Asia. If we can just expose him more to these kinds of competitions, there is no doubt in my mind that he will be even a better rider," said Caltex-Revtex team manager Ner Marquez Dormiendo.

With Aguilar's win, the Philippines leads the Asian Nation Cup standings with 15 points, followed by China (14) and Malaysia (13).

The two Caltex riders, along with Jovie Saulog (3rd) and Ernie Leongson (4th), were sent to Dubai under auspices of the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa), headed by its president Macky Carapiet.

Namssa, the sole governing body for motorsports in the country and is affiliated with the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), took care of the riders' airfare and hotel accommodations.

Moving on

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

HORSERACING, a sport close to my heart, made tremendous strides in 2002, which, according to Philippine Racing Commission chair Jaime Dilag, posted record-breaking sales of P6.8 billion last year compared to the sales of P5.9 billion in 2001.

"It was a banner year," said Dilag, a former pelotari and two-time Philracom commissioner, citing the full support given to the racing industry by the different racing organizations such as Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho) and the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Philtobo), major stakes race sponsors San Miguel Corp. and PCSO as well as the unprecendented patronage of the racing public at both the Santa Ana Park and San Lazaro Hippodrome.

And speaking of the San Lazaro Hippodrome, I was told that the historic racetrack, also known as the Manila Jockey Club, will host a major event on Sunday, March 2, coinciding with the Philracom anniversary. This event will be a sort of "sayonara" races at its Tayuman oval before it moves to the spanking new San Lazaro Leisure Park, a huge, 77-hectare world-class racing complex in Carmona, Cavite, where inaugural races are set for Wednesday, April 2.

"We are preparing exciting races for the *bayang karerista* at our new home," said MJC president lawyer Alfonso "Boy" Reyno. "Everything is in place."

The racing complex, which will also include an equestrian park, is being built under the supervision of a consultant lent by the Japan Racing Association. All the materials used in the racetrack conform with international standard and very horse-friendly. The stables and the Philips lighting facilities are in place. These lights, by the way, are the same ones used to illuminate the football competitions in the Asian and Olympic Games in South Korea.

"*Magiging maliwanag po ang mapapanood ninyo,*" stressed Reyno. "The races will be very clear not only at the San Lazaro Leisure Park, but also in all our OTB's (off track betting stations)."

For his part, MJC executive vice-president and chief operating officer lawyer Roberto Reverente said, "We are inviting all horseracing aficionados to come and visit our new home in Carmona. At the same time, we are taking this oppotunity to thank the industry's direct players, the racing public in particular, without whose support we would not have gone this far."

Reyno first got involved in the "King of Sports" in 1994 when his group of local and foreign investors acquired the Reyes family-owned Santa Ana Park in Makati and later on, the Manila Jockey Club, soon to become the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona.

Boxers receive gifts Feb.13

THE MUCH-AWAITED distribution of financial assistance to destitute and disabled Filipino professional boxers has been moved back to Feb. 13 at the Games and Amusements Board main office, Legaspi Towers 200 along Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. According to GAB chair Eduardo Villanueva, who is also head of the Disabled Boxers Trust Fund Board of Trustees, the postponement was necessary to give ex-pugs more time to sign up and produce necessary documents.

Macalino barges into TMS netfest semis

ATENEO'S Daniel Luis Macalino survived Rafael Espinosa, 6-2, 1-6, 6-3, yesterday to reach the boys' 16-under semifinals in the TMS Ships Agencies Philta Classic at the Villa Gloria Tennis Club outdoor courts in Angeles City.

The fourth seeded Macalino will face second pick Ralph Barte, who breezed past Alien Mallari, 6-1, 6-0, when the tournament resumes Saturday.

Fellow Atenean and top seed Christian Canlas defeated Alvin Manalastas, 6-2, 6-3, to advance against third seed Nico Riego De Dios, a 6-1, 6-2 winner over Leyan Moncera.

Moncera, meanwhile, scored a 7-6(3), 6-2 victory over Patrick Arevalo to advance in the 14-under semifinals against the top-ranked Canlas, a 6-0, 6-3 winner over Alvin Manalastas.

Macalino also made it to the semifinals, demolishing Daniel Bautista, 6-1, 6-1, to advance against third seed Gerard Michael Ngo, who beat Rodel Navarro, 6-0, 7-5.

Peace chessfest Feb. 1

AN INVITATIONAL Swiss-system tournament for business executives and professionals will be held at 10 a.m. on Feb. 1 at the Land Bank Plaza in Malate, Manila.

The one-day tournament, which is being organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia (Acca) with the support of Belgosa Media Systems Inc. and Land Bank, will serve as a side event of the grand finals of the 2002 Philippine Executive Active Chess Express or Peace 2002 which also starts at 10 a.m.

The tournament is only for players with below 2100 Acca ratings. For other details, contact the Acca at 892-8759 or 0918-6966581.

The grand finals of Peace 2002 will produce two champions: one in the Success section and one in the Prosperity section. It is composed of stepladder knockout matches among eight qualifiers each from both sections.

Defending champion Dennis San Juan faces lawyer Quirino Sagario in one of the exciting matches in the quarterfinals in the Success section.

Top seed Jenny Mayor is the man to watch. Mayor, who topped the elimination rounds, is paired against Ricky Navalta.

Gary Legaspi, who finished second in the eliminations, faces engineer Robert Arellano and Ryan Ruiz tackles veteran Noel Garcia in the remaining quarterfinal of the Success section.

If he gets past Navalta, Mayor's next assignment is the winner of the Ruiz-Garcia match.

The victor in the San Juan-Sagario match faces the winner of the Lagaspi-Arellano match in the semifinals.

In the Prosperity Section, top seed Gunnar Abelido meets Rey Paul Hechanova while second-ranked Ramil Acosta goes up against Abraham Dalagan.

Third-ranked Rolando Gangozo is paired against Jose Matutino while No. 4 Cyrus Atienza tackles Ronald Donasco.

The grand finals of Peace 2002 is the culmination of a six-stage elimination round participated in by over a hundred business executives and professionals from various sectors of the Philippine industry.

Originally set for Jan. 25, the grand finals was re-scheduled in recognition of the importance of the 4th World Meeting of Families on Jan. 22-26.

Peugeot set for WRC defense

FRENCH carmaker Peugeot is set to defend its Manufacturers' and Drivers' titles with the same car and driver line-up that dominated the World Rally Championship (WRC) in 2002.

Peugeot will be relying on a team with a proven track record of three Manufacturers' titles and two Drivers' titles, which accomplished the feat in a span of only three years.

Since 2000, Peugeot has won three consecutive Manufacturers' World Championship titles, plus two drivers' crowns with Finn Marcus Graholm.

Peugeot has also decided to retain the same roster of drivers that has given it an unprecedented nine one-two finishes out of the WRC's fourteen rounds. Leading the team is 2000 and 2002 world champion Graholm. Also reprising their appearances with the organization are 2001 World Champion Richard Burns, renowned tarmac specialist Gilles Panizzi and 2001 Swedish Rally winner Harri Rovanper.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1992, West Negros College of Bacolod beat Barotac Nuevo Comprehensive High School, 2-1, to bag the Coke Go-For-Goal Visayas football plum at the Iloilo sports complex.

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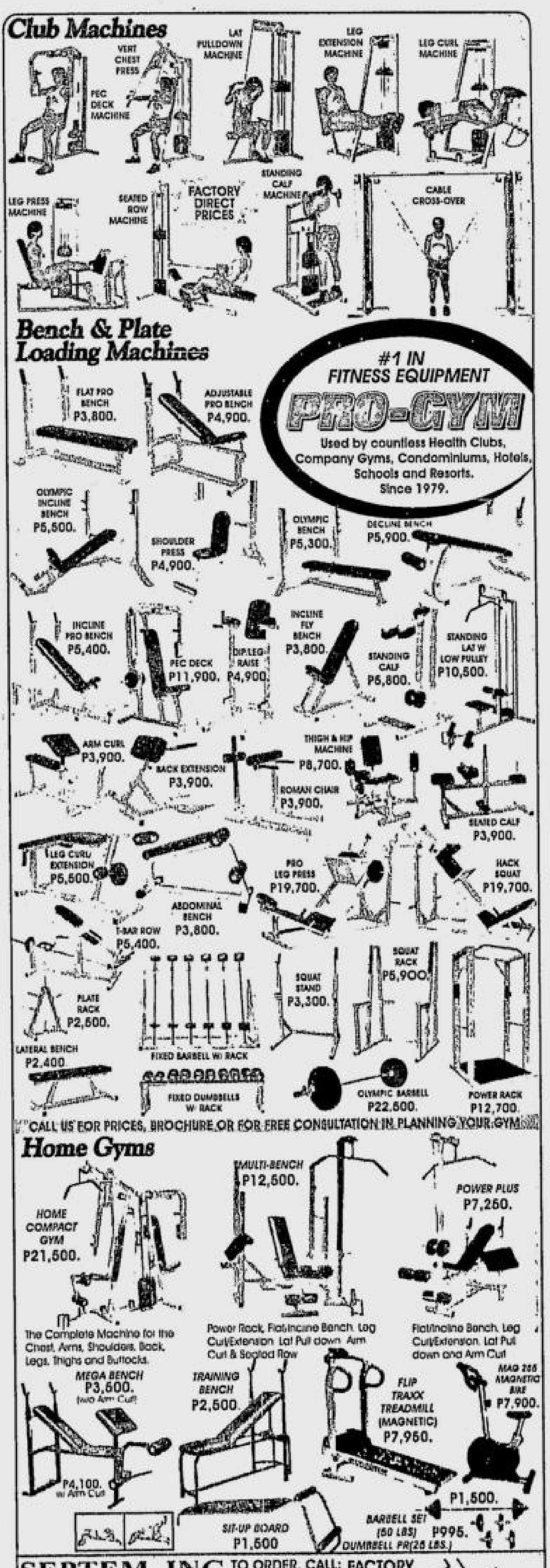

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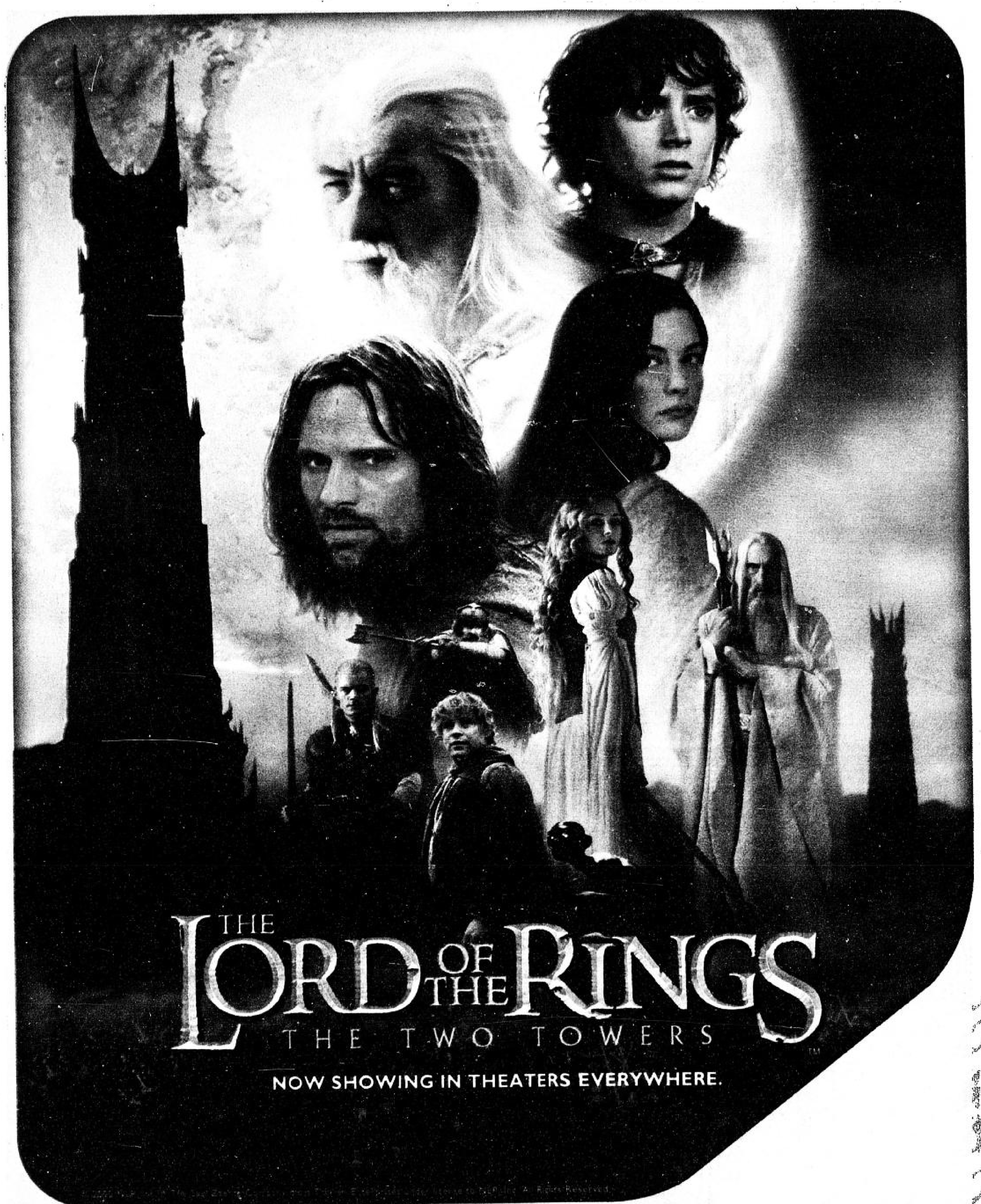
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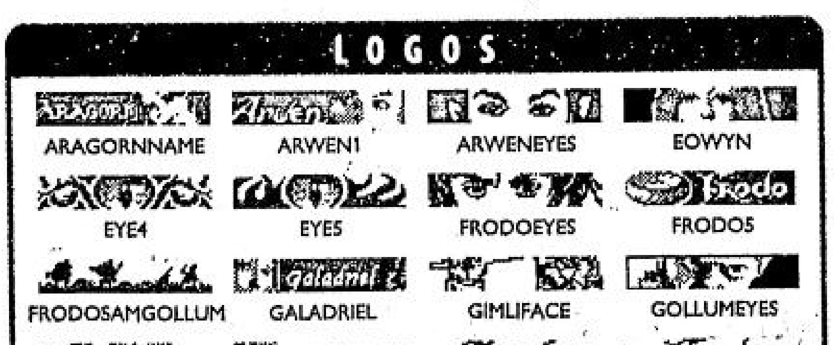
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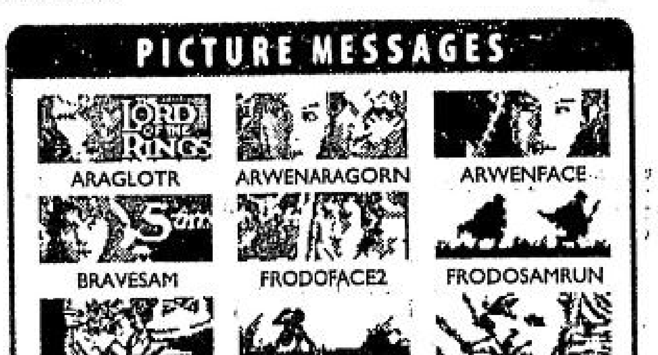
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Editor Louie C. Camino

- 2 sisters choked to death in Makati A26

- She was murdered because of what she knew A27

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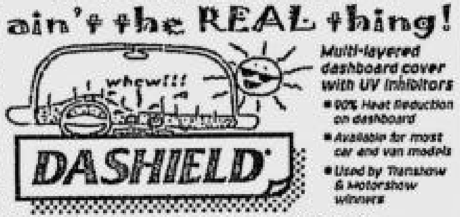
Llamas killer hunted down in Palawan, Pampanga A27



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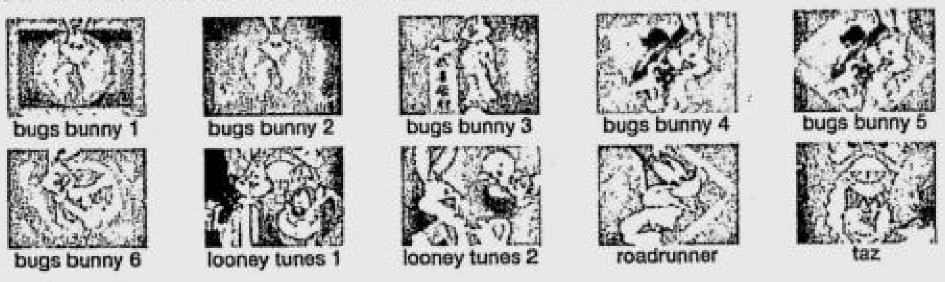

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A tentative move to check impending danger around Naia

By Christian Esguerra

AIRPORT officials have finally moved to address the impending danger posed by a squatter community located near the landing strip of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Parañaque City.

General Manager Edgardo Manda yesterday said he would put up a buffer zone to keep squatters, tricycle drivers, and ambulant vendors from the airport's perimeter.

"We are really concerned about this," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

But here's the catch: Manda said airport officials could not yet determine the size of the buffer zone and if squatters would be driven away.

Authorities, he said, would still have to determine if the area is under the jurisdiction of Pasay or Parañaque and if it's a property of the airport management.

TERRORISTS could shoot from the shanties.

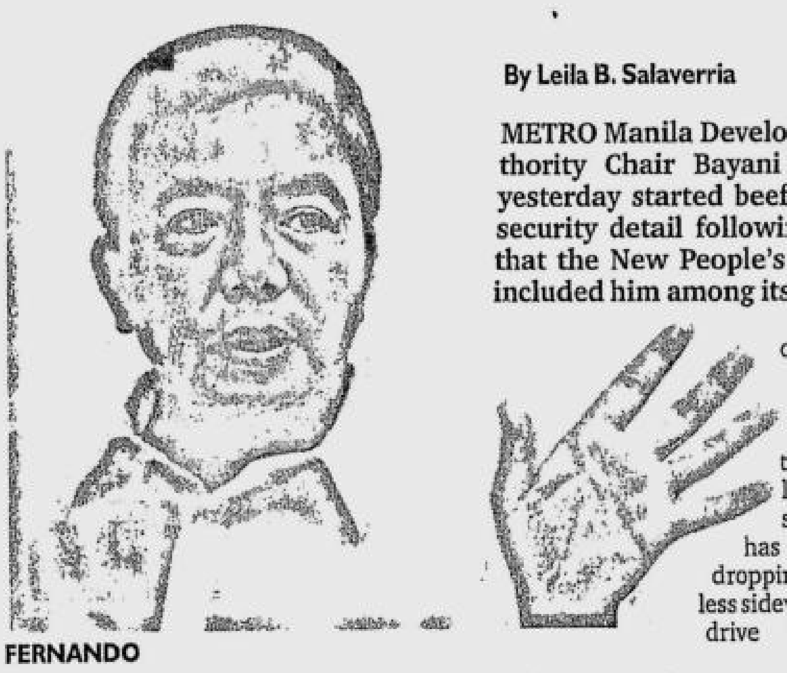
These key points would have to wait until airport officials meet with other government agencies such as the Air Transportation Office and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority later this week, according to Manda.

The decision to establish a buffer zone came nearly a year after Multinational Village residents called Manda's attention regarding tricycle terminals and a community of at least 1,000 squatters hobbled between the village and the airport.

In a letter dated Feb. 28, 2002, village officer Arnel Gacutan expressed fear that the area could "easily be infiltrated by bad elements who (might) attempt ... to create a situation that will endanger (a) landing plane's safety."

Village manager Dave Tuano added that terrorists could easily position themselves in one of the shanties and shoot down an airplane making its final approach at the landing strip.

Fernando: 'I fear but I won't stop'



FERNANDO

By Leila B. Salaverria

METRO Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday started beefing up his security detail following reports that the New People's Army has included him among its targets.

Fernando openly admitted he was worried over the threat on his life but stressed he has no plans of dropping his relentless sidewalk clearing drive which is poised to go nationwide.

"If I stop the clearing operations, who would do it? What would happen to our streets in the future?" he said.

Saying he was not taking the threat lightly, Fernando said he also fears for his wife and daughter.

"I also worry about my safety," he told reporters. "I also have a right to take care of my life. Not only mine, but my family's as well."

The NPA has reportedly put Fernando on the hitlist and branded him an oppressor of the people because of his hard-nosed campaign of removing all obstructions, hawkers included, from the sidewalks in order to restore order in the streets.

But the MMDA chair defended his campaign anew yesterday and reiterated that it was not meant to oppress the poor, but would actually benefit the citizenry.

It is the poor who usually use the sidewalks and not the rich, who tend to always ride their cars, he explained.

Fernando also said that, even though sidewalk vendors protest his clearing drive, there are also a lot of legitimate vendors inside marketplaces, the ones who pay rent and proper taxes who approve of his campaign.

On Monday, Fernando appealed to the NPA to reconsider its decision to include him as a target, saying he was just doing his duty and removing what was illegal from the sidewalks.

A Malacañang official, who requested anonymity, said that Fernando has been included in the hitlist along with other government officials, notably Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao, a former communist.

Slain ex-rebel Romulo "Rolly" Kintanar was allegedly on the latest NPA hitlist.

2 sisters choked to death

By Leila B. Salaverria

TWO sisters were strangled to death with their clothes inside their Makati home on Monday night after being robbed of valuables.

Police were eyeing robbers in the killing of Teresita S. Mejos, 28, and her sister Juliet, 24, inside their house on Reyes St., Barangay del Pilar, Makati City.

The bodies of the two victims were discovered by their cousin Cristine Mejos and her boyfriend Crisbon Ladaya when the pair arrived at the house at around 8:45 p.m.

Cristine told police that when she arrived at the apartment which she shared with her cousins, she was puzzled that the gate and the screen door were open, while the main door was locked.

When she turned on the lights, she was horrified upon seeing Teresita's body sprawled inside the bathroom. Cristine said they rushed upstairs only to discovered Juliet's body in one of the rooms on the second floor.

Both of the victims had items of clothing tied around their necks, but Juliet's face, except for the eyes, were covered with duct tape.

Police said the clothes were used to strangle the victim to death.

The two rooms at the second floor of the house were in total disarray, with money and jewelry missing.

Probers theorized robbery was the main motive behind the crime.

Police were able to recover several pieces of jewelry that the suspects were unable to take.

Child-thrower runs amuck, tries to kill fellow inmate

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE CONFESSED drug-user who killed and threw her daughter down from a fourth-floor apartment went amuck and tried to kill another inmate inside the Western Police District jail on Monday.

Victor Perez, of Room 403 Building E Sambahayan sa Rawis Tenement Building, Sta. Fe Street, Tondo, tried to bash another inmate's head with a concrete block, police said.

But before he could kill Jay Romero, other inmates subdued Perez and beat him up inside the prison, police added.

"*Naaborido ako,*" Perez confessed yesterday from inside his cell. He had bruises and his shirt was in tatters.

PEREZ

Perez said he went into a blind rage because his "wife had left him for another man."

Perez was jailed after he stabbed his daughter Melody five times and threw her off the 4th floor of his apartment building.

Police found shabu paraphernalia in Perez's room.

Perez said he got hooked on shabu after his wife Marlyn, 29, left to work as a domestic helper in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia in October last year.

Perez insisted that he saw his wife on Sunday inside their apartment building. He said he tried to call her but she allegedly did not listen to him.

Detective Ernesto Jose Jr., the case investigator, confirmed that Marlyn is still in Saudi Arabia.

The suspect was charged with parricide on Monday night before the Manila Prosecutor's Office. No bail was set.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 29, 2003
3rd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Heb 10:11-18
Gospel: Mk 4:1-20

Jesus began to teach by the lake, but such a large crowd gathered about him that he got into a boat and sat in it on the lake while the crowd stood on the shore. He taught them many things through stories or parables. In his teaching he said, "Listen! The sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some of the seed fell along a path and the birds came and ate it up. Some of the seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil; it sprang up immediately because it had no depth; but when the sun rose and burned it, it withered because it had no roots. Other seed fell among thornbushes and the thorns grew and choked it, so it didn't produce any grain. But some seed fell on good soil, grew and increased and yielded grain; some produced thirty times as much, others sixty and others one hundred times as much." And Jesus added, "Listen then, if you have ears."

When the crowd went away, some who were around him with the Twelve asked about the parables.

He answered them, "The mystery of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But for those outside, everything comes in parables, so that the more they see, they don't perceive; the more they hear, they don't understand; otherwise they would be converted and pardoned."

Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any of the parables? What the sower is sowing is the word. Those along the path where the seed fell are people who hear the word, but as soon as they do, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Other people receive the word like rocky ground. As soon as they hear the word, they accept it with joy, but they have no roots so it lasts only a little while. No sooner does trouble or persecution come because of the word, than they fall. Others receive the seed as among thorns. After they hear the word, they are caught up in the worries of this life, false hopes of riches and other desires. All these come in and choke the word so that finally it produces nothing.

And there are others who receive the word as good soil. They hear the word, take it to heart and produce: some thirty, some sixty and some one hundred times as much."

Commentary

The parables of Jesus were not about heroes, gods and goddesses, angels or other such extraterrestrial folk! They were stories of ordinary Galilean life: sowing and planting, shepherding, the world of trade and fishing, a woman baking or cleaning her house. The point is: Jesus saw his Father's activity and closeness in all this ordinariness. All life spoke to him of his Father; and thus he spoke in parables, using all aspects of life to speak of his Father and his Kingdom to the crowds. In today's parable, we are given a glimpse of the source of Jesus' dauntlessness. His work and teaching were met by rejection, failure, and hostility-and yet he pushed on. Why? Because even as the sower meets failure after failure in his sowing, yet in the end, some seed does fall on good soil to bear fruit in extraordinary abundance. Jesus shares his profound hope that despite all setbacks and adversities, God's liberating purposes, God's Kingdom will triumph.

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No more dilly-dallying, Atienza tells 3 oil firms

By Jerome Aning

"MINIMUM concern for the safety of Pandacan residents translated into substantial compliance and a sense or urgency."

This was reiterated yesterday by Manila mayor Lito Atienza on the insistent appeal of the country's three biggest oil firms to be able to continue operating at the Pandacan oil depot.

Unless the oil firms show sincerity in complying with the terms of their agreement with City Hall to reduce their operations by more than a third, Atienza said he is not inclined to give consideration.

He stressed that the ordinance phasing out the depot, which the reduction agreement modified, will be enforced unless the law is amended or revised by the City Council.

The mayor said he is awaiting a reply from Caltex, Shell and Petron to his letter, wherein he said he expressed his "disappointment and frustration" over the slow compliance.

In a paid advertisement, the oil firms said they need more time to fulfill their obligations without interrupting the supply of petroleum products to Manila and a large part of Luzon.

The companies said "complex issues" such as the ownership and the operation of an integrated facility have yet to be studied and discussed among them.

But the mayor dismissed this as mere dilly-dallying.

"The integration plan has been approved by a consultant but unfortunately, it still remains a plan," Atienza said.

He also lamented that the "green buffer zone" promised by the oil firms to protect the residential areas in Pandacan remained "mere diggings."

The mayor said he wants to see first sincerity from the oil firms before he endorses any alteration of the phaseout ordinance.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

POLITICAL LAW (ELECTORAL LAW)—Eligibility of candidates for public office—Candidates who are disqualified by final judgment before the election shall not be voted for and the votes cast for them shall not be counted. But those against whom no final judgment of disqualification had been rendered may be voted for and proclaimed, unless, on motion of the complainant, the Comelec suspends their proclamation because the grounds for their disqualification or cancellation of their certificates of candidacy are strong. Meanwhile, the proceedings for disqualification of candidates or for the cancellation or denial of certificates of candidacy, which have been begun before the elections, should continue even after such elections and proclamation of the winners. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Mendoza, Coquilla v. Commission on Elections, G. R. No. 151914, July 31, 2002] DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

So who loves boxing?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU'RE right, your reporter here has finally decided to stop playing postman.

Two more explanatory letters, from American Perry McNeely, an immigration detainee in Mandaue, and Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo, reached our desk yesterday.

But they will no longer see print here. These messages, urgent as they are, have been submitted to our letter editor.

It's about time we settled down to work, and what could be more assuring than this joyful report from a group of boxing scouts that ventured into Cebu during the Sinulog festival.

***

The head of the boxing scouts, lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, returned from Cebu sounding extremely excited. Reason was a prize find: Z Gorres, who scored his 12th victory (against no loss) during the Cebu slugfest.

Mr. Salud swears Gorres, 20, 5-foot-four, 112-pounds, has the solid gifts of a future world champion.

Who's Z Gorres?

He's a standout from the rich Tony Aldeguer stable who stopped veteran Rick Escaner in the fourth round of their Cebu encounter.

Informed that Salud now plans to take Gorres under his wings, Salven Lagumbay, considered the top boxing writer in Cebu today, sent us a text message which went thus: "But Mr. Salud saw only the tip of the iceberg. There are better boxers like Rodel Mayol, Randy Suico, Marvin Tampus, Yukka Gejon, Jake Lear, Roselito Campana, etc."

***

Wow! Mr. Lagumbay could've provided an even longer list of budding prizefight celebrities.

However, he was told that Mr. Salud did not go to Cebu to bag molded and marketable fighters.

In the first place, the founding secgen of the World Boxing Council is not your usual idea of a fight manager.

Mr. Salud is not there for the business of it.

He's there for the love of the sport.

This simply means he's willing to spend time, money, effort to discover and raise young, promising boxers.

***

He was indeed impressed with Gorres, Salud confirmed.

Gorres has the makings if what we love to call a ring virtuoso, Salud said, like the young Gerry Peñalosa.

Still, Salud wants to have a second look at Gorres before he decides to send him to the California camp of trainer Freddie Roach, who's currently handling Mike Tyson.

Gorres will be seeing action in the undercard of Manny Pacquiao's non-title outing in Manila in early March.

***

Salud decided to manage new fighters only after Gerry Peñalosa, whom he had tried to lead back to a world throne, had announced his retirement.

Salud can be expected to dote on Gorres like a true father, the way he had wholeheartedly supported and guided Peñalosa.

Who's Z Gorres?

No, the question to ask is: why is Rudy Salud, who could well rest on his laurels, doing all these for RP boxing.

Answer: because nobody in the government boxing agency appears knowledgeable, selfless and dedicated enough to upgrade the sport here.

Government boxing people, unlike Mr. Salud, are there not for the love of it.

Kilabot ng mga Kriminal! Magbabalik na!

Llamas killer hunted down in Palawan, Pampanga

By Philip Tubeza and Jofelle Tesorio,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation agents on the trail of the suspect in the killing of top Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas have received reports that Bashir Abdulrahman may be in Pampanga, or as far as the country's "southern backdoor" in Mindanao.

An NBI official in Manila yesterday said that Abdùlrahman might have flown to Mindanao to get to Malaysia or Indonesia.

But according to Onos Mangotara, head of the NBI office in Palawan, the suspect's family has reportedly gone to Pampanga to join the fugitive there.

In Manila, the NBI official, who requested anonymity, said the agents have checked the known places in Palawan where the gunman used to stay, but their search turned up nothing.

The official added that the suspect might have slipped through the joint NBI-police dragnet.

Abdulrahman, a resident of 913 Arlegui Street, Quiapo, Manila, is a native of Marawi City.

NBI agents earlier combed two Muslim communities in Palawan but did not find the suspect, the official said.

In Puerto Princesa, Mangotara confirmed that the suspect is no longer in Bataraza, Palawan.

He said there is a big probability that Abdulrahman's family has gone to Pampanga to join him there.

Mangotara said Abdulrahman used to brag about his closeness to Pampanga Gov. Lito Lapid and that the suspect allegedly could ask any favor from the governor.

"He used to boast of having a strong connection with Lito Lapid," Mangotara said.

He added Abdulrahman was last seen in Coron, a municipality in the northern tip of Palawan, on Jan. 1.

This was confirmed by NBI informers in Puerto Princesa, who said Abdulrahman has a business in Coron.

They said his wife and children looked after the business when he was not around.

The informers also revealed that Abdulrahman's family suddently left Coron on Jan. 19 on board the Superferry.

This was more than a week after the shooting incident on Jan. 10.

Some Philippine National Police officials in Puerto Princesa believe that the suspect might still be in Bataraza, Palawan, a perfect jump-off point to Malaysia.

Boats in Bataraza regularly go to and from Malaysia or Brunei, using a "backdoor."

For P1,000 or less, a man in Bataraza can hire a passenger boat anytime of the day.

But NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said he is confident that Abdulrahman would be found.

Wycoco said that the relatives of suspect-turned-state witness Cola M. Didato are also helping in hunting down Abdulrahman.

Police warned the public that the suspect is "armed and dangerous."

Abdulrahman owns a 9-mm pistol, which he used to shoot Llamas.

The suspect allegedly shot Llamas on Jan. 10 during a traffic altercation at the corner of Taft and Buendia avenues in Pasay City.

The victim had apparently bumped the gunman's motorcycle and the suspect fell.

Abdulrahman then shot Llamas twice in the head and once in the chest.

DEATH OF 2ND LT. JESSICA M. CHAVEZ

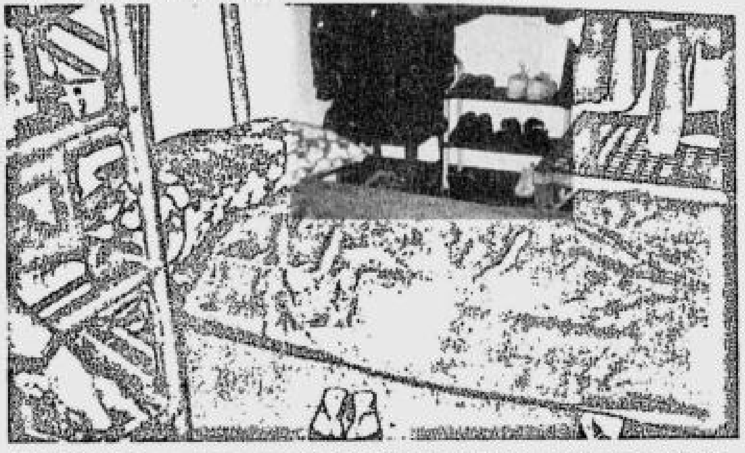
She was murdered because of what she knew, Pa says

By Jerry Esplanada

(Second of two parts)

JESSICA'S parents Efren and Milwelda Chavez listen to what could be the vital evidence pointing to a murder. PDI PHOTO

2ND LT. Jessica M. Chavez in a graduation picture taken in her last year at the Philippine Military Academy.



WHERE it all happened—Jessica's bunk in her quarters at Fort Bonifacio.

DAYS after 2nd Lt. Jessica M. Chavez died from a gunshot wound in the chest, her mother Milwelda was rummaging through her late daughter's belongings and found a cassette tape.

The contents of the tape appeared to have confirmed the Chavez family's worst fears.

"*Yung kalahati akin muna. Alam mo naman marami tayong pagbibigyan sa labas ... Sa kabila, sa kasama natin ... Ipadala mo sa courier mamaya para maitago natin ng konti ... alam mo naman maraming nakikinig sa himpapawid* (I'll take one-half. You know we need to give the others ... Those on the other side, then our colleagues ... Send it by courier so we'll be able to conceal it ... I'm sure you know there are many listening over the airwaves)."

It was a taped conversation among military personnel which could indicate alleged anomalous transactions by members of the 191st Military Police Battalion in Fort Bonifacio.

The cassette tape was part of the young officer's belongings recovered from her barracks.

"I found the tape hidden in my daughter's folded maong pants," Milwelda told the INQUIRER during an interview at the Chavez residence in Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur. "Apparently, (Jessica) put it there on purpose. It must have been important because it was separated from her collection of music tapes."

Jessica's father, Efren, said the tape was "evidence of possible wrongdoings."

An I-TEAM *Report*

He believed Jessica, who was platoon leader and signal officer of the Army's 191st Military Police Battalion at the time of her death, intercepted the conversation from radio transmissions.

According to her father, Jessica could have been killed because of the anomaly she had uncovered.

Jessica, a member of the Philippine Military Academy's Sanghaya Class 2000, died on Feb. 9, 2001.

She was 23.

'They ignored the tapes'

"I furnished ... the military officers who took part in the court martial proceedings a copy of that tape," Efren said. "But the tape and its contents were never taken up during any of the hearings. (The officers) ignored (the tapes). We found that a little strange."

The Chavez family furnished the INQUIRER a copy of the tape. The recorded conversation ran for more than 35 minutes. The tape contained the voices of three people who called themselves Echo Mike, Echo Fox and Whisky Bravo (also referred to as "Bumbay").

Military sources who heard the tape described the conversation as "not the usual coded day-to-day messages."

A part of the conversation referred to a directive of a certain Bravo Tango, codenamed Nanay (Mother), instructing those taking part in the conversation to proceed to their usual *"tagpuan"* (meeting place) for an "emergency plenum."

"*Sabi ni Nanay, pakialalay sa daanan ... baka may mga pusa* (Mother said we have to guide the person along the way ... there may be cats lurking)," said one person who spoke with an Ilonggo accent.

In another part of the conversation, one of the voices mentioned an unidentified Philippine National Police official, who supposedly refused to cooperate with the three men. Another enumerated at least six items with their respective serial numbers.

Gunrunning activities

A top army officer at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City claimed the coded messages pointed to guns, and possible gunrunning activities.

"At first we thought they were talking about checks ... loan business and money market operations which are old hat in both the AFP and the PNP," said the army officer after listening to the conversation. "But I'm more inclined to believe those men were talking about guns."

In another interview, one of Jessica's "mistahs" (PMA term for classmates) recalled that "sometime in late 2000, (Jessica) called me up on my cell phone to tell me she was on her way to one of the piers in Manila, and that she had been ordered by her superiors to pick up a gun shipment from the South."

"Jessica did not give any details about that particular shipment," added Jessica's classmate, who refused to be named. "I did not bother to ask. I knew she was on official business. She also didn't say if she was alone or if she was with some colleagues."

Rumors

Jessica's demise fueled rumors that she was pregnant at the time of her death.

There were other rumors involving Jessica's former commander in the 191st Military Police Battalion, Lt. Col. Ramon Mateo Dizon, and his wife, Jo Ann.

Some members of the 191st MP Battalion have alleged that "Mrs. Dizon was (at the army base) the morning the shooting took place."

"She did it because she misunderstood Jessica's closeness with her husband," the men said.

They also claimed the old logbook in Jessica's barracks mysteriously disappeared the day she died.

Dizon, now deputy commander of the AFP's Anti-Crime Task Force based in Camp Aguinaldo, laughed off the allegations.

"Why should I take them seriously?" said Dizon, who belongs to PMA Class 1983. "They are all lies."

Dizon claimed he "treated Jess like a good friend."

"I even recommended her for schooling in the United States for the basic MP officers course," Dizon said.

Financial anomalies

He brushed aside other below-the-belt allegations against his wife, noting "she was not fond of going to my office (in Fort Bonifacio)."

"Now if it's about the financial anomalies ... (Jessica's parents) can go and ask the MP Battalion how I handled its finances," Dizon explained. "I never touched any funds. Like me, Jessica had no access to any funds. She's not the finance sergeant. And the unit's budget was not really that big, all in all less than P300,000. We're very transparent where the funds went."

According to Dizon, "what really happened that morning of Feb. 9, 2001 ... I think, was an accident, not murder."

"There's no way that anybody could have gotten into that room. It happened before 7 (a.m.). The whole battalion lives in the area. By 6:30, everybody's up and about.

"If you're serious about doing any foolishness, you'll probably do it somewhere else. And not at that time," he emphasized.

On Aug. 17, 2001, the military court acquitted Dizon and two other Army officers—Maj. Ricardo Visaya and Capt. Domingo Campos—of charges of violation of Sections 96 (conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman) and 97 (acts prejudicial to good order and military discipline) of the Articles of War.

Three days earlier, Rizal Assistant Prosecutor Marianito Santos had dismissed a criminal case against the three officers and Private Mary Arvie Juanitas for lack of merit.

Lost evidence

A complaint for obstruction of apprehension and prosecution of criminal suspects was filed against the Army officials after they ordered that Jessica's room be cleaned up immediately after she was found dead. Among those taken from the MP Battalion quarters were bullets, slugs, shells, and the T-shirt Jessica was wearing the day she died.

In a resolution, the Rizal fiscal's office said the respondents could not be accused of meddling with the investigation because they did it to safeguard or preserve the evidence.

"But what evidence were preserved when the respondents cleaned up the crime scene and removed vital evidence from it?" asked Efren. "The respondents, being Army officers, knew very well that they're supposed to safeguard the scene of the crime, especially the vital evidence."

Jessica's father may have been right. In a 196-page report on his daughter's death, the National Bureau of Investigation declared that Dizon and his fellow officers "failed to dutifully preserve the crime scene."

"Thus, appropriate administrative sanction(s) should be imposed upon the respondents."

The NBI said the MP Battalion officers' "careless handling of the crime scene is a cause for concern."

Malice

"This carelessness could have been a result of indiscretion or, to a large extent, malice," the report showed.

But according to the report, "these alone were not a sufficient basis to approximate foul play, although it somehow affected the investigation which was rendered ineffective by the disorderly handling of the crime scene."

Still, the NBI recommended that the case be closed and terminated, citing "overwhelming evidence pointing to a case of a self-inflicted fatal wound."

But Jessica's father asserted it should not have been the case. He pointed out that his daughter could have been murdered because of what she knew about the anomaly involving her Army colleagues.

"Instead of unmasking the people behind the anomalous deal and exposing corruption in her unit, she decided to just quit her job," he said. "But they managed to silence her for good."

"Too bad, the Armed Forces, the PNP and the NBI did not bother to look into that angle and dig deeper. They should have taken a second if not a third look."

Cervantes slay suspect spotted in Mindanao

By Christian Esguerra

POLICE have finally pinpointed the whereabouts of the man who allegedly set up the murder of government informant Baron Cervantes more than a year ago.

Santiago "Sonny" Camacho has been spotted in Mindanao, where he has been staying with his uncle, an Army sergeant, and several armed men for at least two weeks now, Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Maganto said he would go to Mindanao to personally facilitate the arrest. He said he was also coordinating with local police and military units there to back him and his men should Camacho and his protectors resist.

"It would be better if he would just surrender peacefully and face the charges against him," the police general said. "We want to avoid a clash."

In the meantime, Maganto said a lawyer was negotiating the surrender of Camacho's fellow fugitive, Supt. Rafael Cardeño, who was last spotted somewhere in Metro Manila.

Maganto said he had sought the help of the lawyer following the collapse of the negotiation which Cardeño's counsel Homobono Adaza tried to facilitate more than two weeks ago.

Adaza had supposedly promised to turn in the fugitive within a week, but denied that he had made such a commitment when the deadline came. He has also been insisting that he no longer has any contact with his client.

Two weeks ago, Maganto said Cardeño phoned him to express his sentiments about his being tagged as the mastermind of the Cervantes murder and about several "political issues."

Asked to surrender, Cardeño had said he would "think it over," the police official said.

No blood for oil, protesters tell GMA

By Matthew Murphy
Contributor

NO BLOOD for oil.

That was the message the anti-war protesters sent to President Macapagal-Arroyo as they formed picket lines outside the US embassy yesterday morning.

But the picket itself turned violent when anti-riot policemen decided to deal with the 50 protesters on Roxas Boulevard, just as Akbayan Rep. Mario Aguja was still making his anti-war speech.

The police suddenly pushed Aguja with the other Akbayan members across the busy thoroughfare when they got too close to the embassy at around 10:30 a.m.

Aguja was not injured, but RPN 9 cameraman Gerardo Sabater sustained a cut in the head after a placard hit him.

Ermita police chief Senior Supt. Gorgonio Rosero also got bruises on his left arm.

In a speech, Marie Victa Labajo, Secretary General of the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party, asked the President to stop supporting the United States in the impending war on Iraq.

She said also wanted the US to respect the findings of the UN Inspection Team's report that Iraq has not restarted its nuclear program.

Labajo said a war at this time would hurt the economy, especially if the jobs of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos working in the Middle East are endangered.

"We call on the Arroyo government to declare its respect for the UN findings and to clearly state its position against any US military offensive in Iraq," Labajo said.

The protest of the Akbayan Citizen's Action Party was only one of three protests staged yesterday at the US Embassy.

Members of the militant women's group Gabriela arrived at around 11 a.m. and urged the President to listen to the views of her own people, and not those of US President George Bush.

The protesters sustained their chants for over an hour and insisted they would not give up fighting until the Arroyo government spoke out against the war.

For sreening times, call 729-7777.
Schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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1 SUKDULAN
2 RING (ORIG. JAPANESE VERSION)
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 THE HOT CHICK

G4 GLORIETTA 4
1 THE HOT CHICK
2 8 MILE
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30
4 FEMME FATALE
5 BELOW
6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 OFF KEY (EXCLUSIVE) 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
Onstage
OGIE ALCASID: OA SA PUSO
Feb. 7, 8, 13, 14 & 15

GB3 GREENBELT 3
1 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 11:40, 2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:40
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 12:20, 3:05, 5:50, 8:35, 11:20
3 BELOW 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25, 11:30
4 FEMME FATALE 11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30
5 THE HOT CHICK 1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50, 11:00

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4
5

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4 SWIM FAN

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3 (DOLBY) ANALZE THAT
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10 MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
11 HOT CHICK
12 SUKDULAN

SM CITY MANILA
5238240
1 HOT CHICK
2 RING (JAPANESE)
3 TRY SEVENTEEN
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5 BELOW
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8 HALF PAST DEAD
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9296452
1 FEMME FATALE
2 8 MILE
3 HOT CHICK
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5 RING (JAPANESE)
6 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7 BELOW
8 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

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1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
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7 VAMPS
8 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

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4 CHARLOTTE GRAY
5 THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
6 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7 CLOSED
8 SUKDULAN

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4 HOT CHICK
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
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4 BELOW

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2 SUKDULAN
3 ANALYZE THAT
4 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

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1 THE RING (US VERSION)
2 LORD OF THE RINGS II
3 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4 BELOW
5 HOT CHICK
6 FEMME FETALE
7 8 MILE
8 SUKDULAN

Novaliches 935- 3229 - 30
1 LORD OF THE RINGS II
2 THE RING (US VERSION)
3 HOT CHICK
4 SUKDULAN
5 FEMME FETALE
6 8 MILE
7 BELOW
8 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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1 KERIDA
2 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
3 SUKDULAN
4 FEMME FETALE

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2 SUKDULAN
3 ANALYZE THAT
4 BELOW
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6 HOT CHICK

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2 8 MILE
3 BELOW
4 THE RING (US VERSION)
5 CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6 SUKDULAN

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2 BELOW
3 SUKDULAN
4 THE RING (US VERSION)
5 ANALYZE THAT

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1 LORD OF THE RINGS II
2 BELOW
3 LORD OF THE RINGS II
4 HALF PAST DEAD
5 THE RING (US VERSION)
6 8 MILE

Iloilo 336- 8077 - 78
1 LORD OF THE RING II
2 HALF PAST DEAD
3 SUKDULAN
4 LORD OF THE RING II
5 CHARLOTTE GRAY
6 THE RING (US VERSION)

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FIELD WORK. "I-Witness" hosts (clockwise from top) Arnold Clavio, Vicky Morales, Jessica Soho and Cheche Lazaro with two of their subjects.

Network makes a difference through news and information

THE TENETS of broadcast journalism go beyond the search for truth, for what makes the profession truly challenging is the fact that news and information could make a difference in the lives of people.

Decades of TV viewing have yielded a new breed of sophisticated audiences that no longer settle for mere information. They are now more sensitive to how news and information are delivered in the fastest, most accurate and most responsible way.

Thus, the quality of news and public affairs programs are gauged by their effectiveness in disseminating information in a socially acceptable and responsible context.

Proof of how broadcast journalism in the Philippines has evolved into a respected and credible genre is the enormous feat demonstrated by GMA 7's "Saksi," when it bagged the gold award in the recently concluded New York Festivals.

What makes this achievement all the more outstanding is that "Saksi," which also won as Asia's best newscast in the 2000 Asian TV Awards, is the first Philippine program to win the top plum of the New York Festivals, the international competition that has been honoring mass communications excellence in the world since 1957.

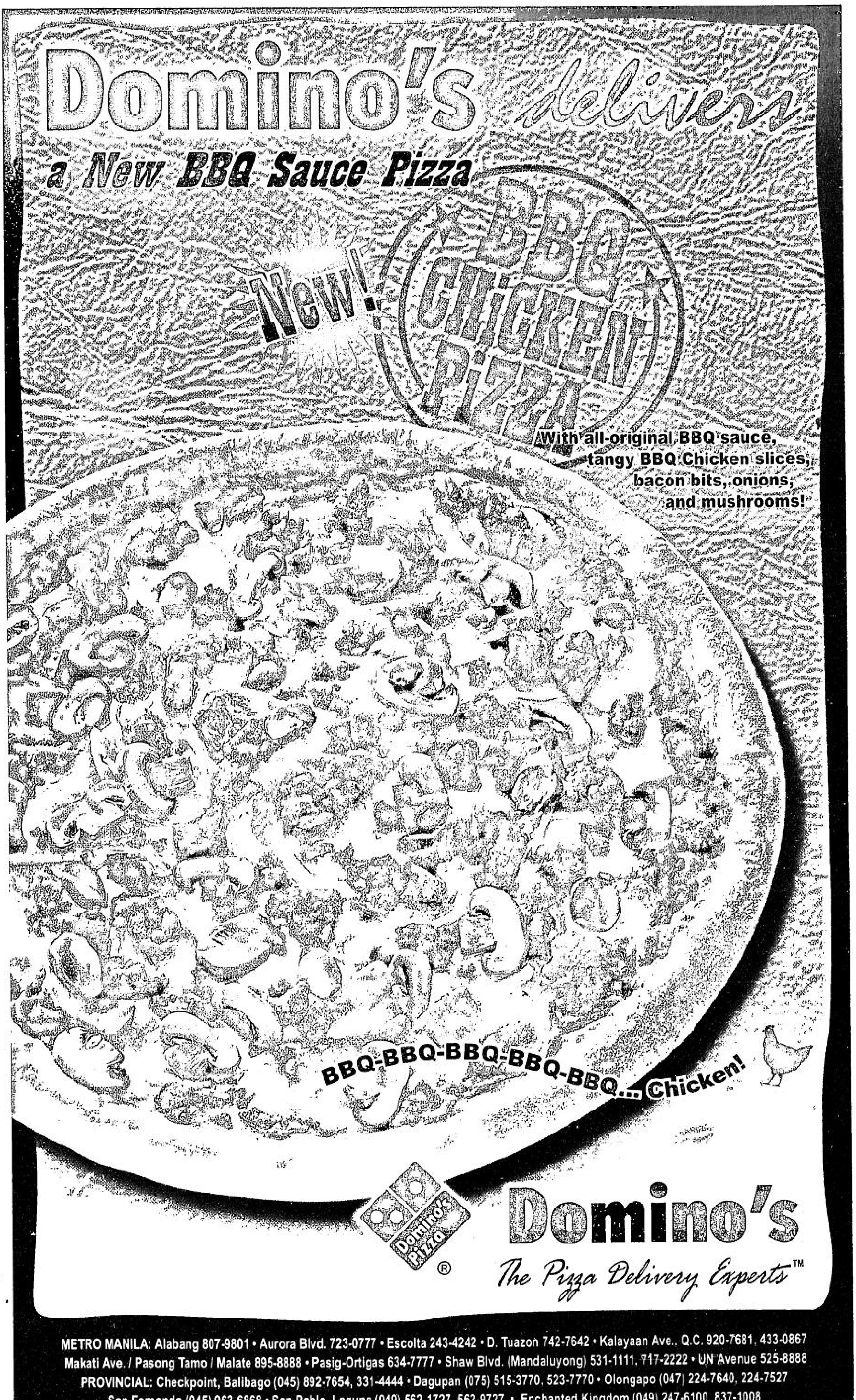
The New York Festival gold award for "Saksi" is another unprecedented feat of GMA 7 in Philippine broadcasting, after winning the highly coveted Peabody Award in 2000. The recent gold award is the 17th medal garnered by the network from the New York Festivals since 1990.

Aside from "Saksi," two episodes of GMA 7's "I-Witness" were also finalists for the best documentary category: Maki Pulido's "Sex Slave" and Vicky Morales' "Askal."

Through programs that provide both in-depth investigations and unwavering public service, GMA 7 enjoys the distinction of being the most-awarded network in news and public affairs.

GMA 7 has been changing the landscape of broadcast journalism in the country, setting an example for others to follow and therefore uplifting the quality of news and public affairs programs that will eventually redound to benefit the Filipino people.

'TRIPLE X' ON VIDEO Xander Cage (Vin Diesel) is a notorious underground thrill-seeker who, until now, has been deemed untouchable by the law. But when he goes way over the line with his latest stunt, he's faced with two options—infiltrate a ruthless Russian crime ring for the American government or go to jail. Teaming up with NSA Agent Gibbons, Cage turns spy with the code name XXX. "Triple X" is a high-octane, turbo-charged thrill-ride from the acclaimed director of "The Fast and the Furious." The action film is now available on original VHS, VCD and DVD distributed by Magnavision Inc. from Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment.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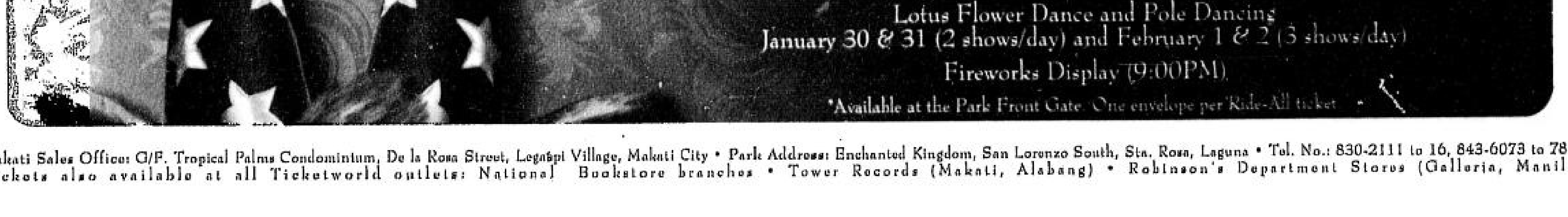
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0196 Series of 2003



Have a thrilling start to the Year of the Goat.

Celebrate the Chinese New Year right with our special treats!
On February 1 & 2, all Ride-All ticket holders will get special Enchanted Kingdom Ang Pao envelopes.* And be sure to check out and marvel at the dazzling display of dexterity of our performers:

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Seriously conditioned injuries, Niño Aquino, and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: Do you think that there will be war in the Middle East this year, as many people fear?

Guest: The danger is there. If attacked, Iraq could hit back not just at the US, but also at its neighbors, like Israel. And other countries in the region could also join in the fray! It could even be the start of World War Two!

(*Ay*, World War Two!)

***

Host: When will the president of your international organization visit the Philippines?

Guest: Next month, it's all set. We will make him experience true Filipino hospitality, starting with a big welcome for him at the Niño Aquino International Airport!

(Great! But who in the world is Niño Aquino?)

***

Host: How are you making sure that there will be no terrorist activities at the start of the New Year in Metro Manila?

Guest: We are taking all precautions. We have added more personnel to patrol the shitty streets.

(You don't have to be so graphic, please!)

***

Host: What is your fashion prediction for 2003?

Guest: Based on trends abroad, fashion here this year will be more adventure!

(*Ay*, Adventure!)

***

Host: What's the latest on the shootout there?

Field reporter: The latest figures on injuries from the police are five injured, three of them seriously conditioned!

(Seriously conditioned injuries? *Bago 'yon, a.*)

***

Host: From your observations, how is the life of the average Filipino now?

Guest: Well, obviously, it's much different now more!

(Uh, please repeat—in the proper order.)

***

Host: I hear you're no longer with your boyfriend?

Starlet: No more, we broke up—after I found out that he had another girlfriend!

Host: How terrible! How do you feel about love now?

Starlet: Oh, I still believe in love as unconditionally, come what may!

(Wow!)

Some likely Oscar nominees

THE 2002 Oscar finalists won't be announced until Feb. 11, but show biz observers, analysts and seers have already come up with a shortlist of likely nominees.

In the Best Picture category, they include: "Chicago," a breezy, sassy musical that features surprisingly exhilarating song-and-dance performances by the likes of **Richard Gere, Renee Zellweger** and **Catherine Zeta-Jones.**

"The Hours," on the life and death of **Virginia Woolf,** as brilliantly portrayed by **Nicole Kidman.**

"The Pianist," **Roman Polanski's** film that's already won at Cannes. It's suffused with personal resonance, because it evokes the filmmaker's own escape from the Warsaw ghetto during World War Two.

"The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers." This ravishing sequel's strengths speak for themselves, but some analysts say that it may win mostly technical awards, because Hollywood seems to have a bias against sequels winning top awards.

"Gangs of New York." It is hoped that **Martin Scorsese** will finally win bigtime for his latest masterpiece, starring **Leonardo DiCaprio** and **Daniel Day-Lewis.**

Other strong contenders: "Far From Heaven," "Antwone Fisher," "Catch Me If You Can," "Road to Perdition" and "About Schmidt."

Which ones will the Academy voters bless on Feb. 11?

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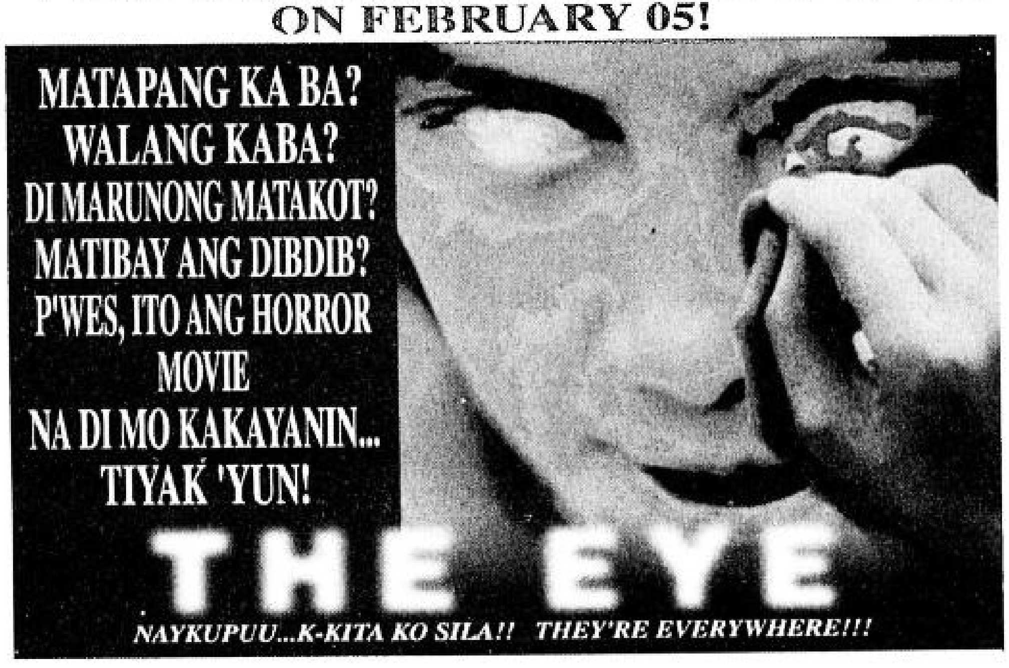

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ON FEBRUARY 05!
MATAPANG KA BA?
WALANG KABA?
DI MARUNONG MATAKOT?
MATIBAY ANG DIBDIB?
P'WES, ITO ANG HORROR MOVIE
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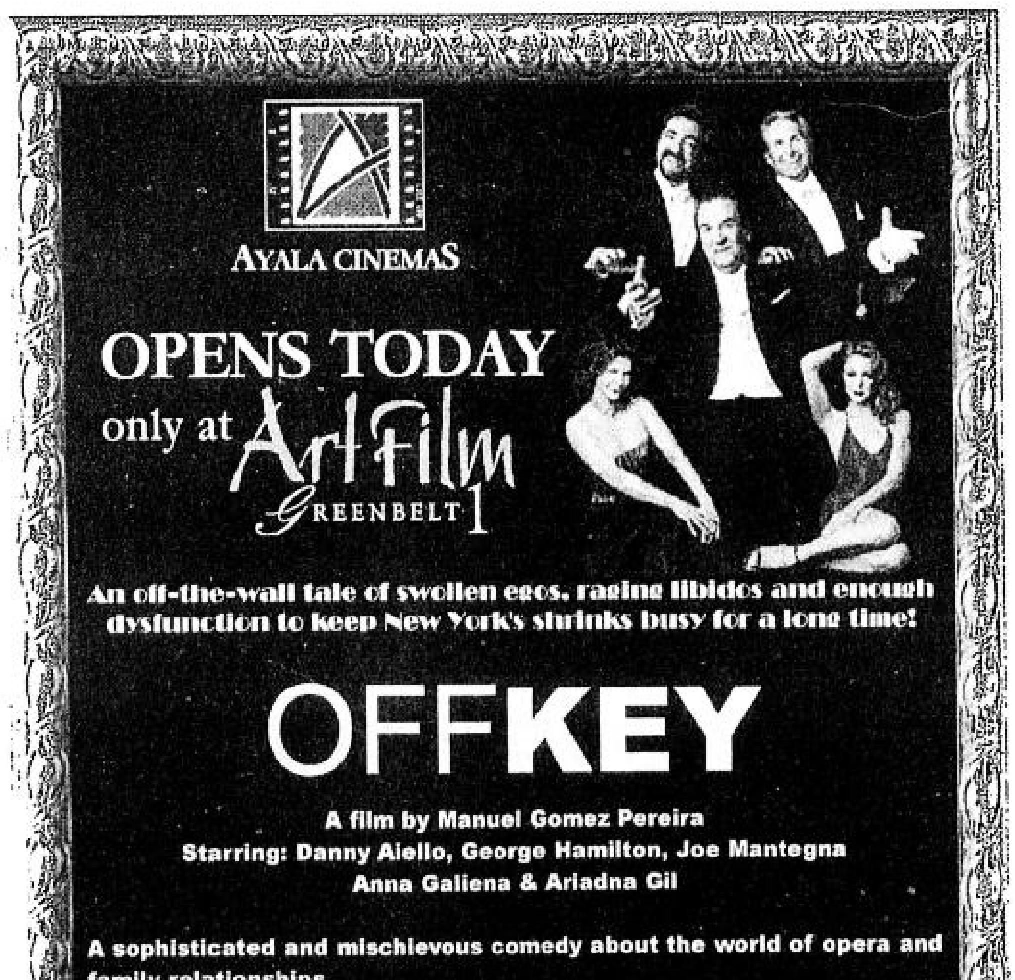

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An off-the-wall tale of swollen egos, raging libidos and enough dysfunction to keep New York's shrinks busy for a long time!
OFFKEY
A film by Manuel Gomez Pereira
Starring: Danny Aiello, George Hamilton, Joe Mantegna
Anna Galiena & Ariadna Gil

A sophisticated and mischievous comedy about the world of opera and family relationships.

RICARDO (Joe Montegna), the group's charming philanderer is caught off guard by his estranged daughter's wedding announcement to the trio's pompous Frenchman, ARMAND (George Hamilton). As distasteful as Ricardo finds the announcement, he is not one to pass up an opportunity to reunite the three tenors after their stormy break-up. Completing the trio is FABRIZIO (Danny Aille), the group's obsessive-compulsive basket case. As the temperamental trio troop to a magnificent chateau for one long wedding banquet weekend, along with past and present wives, sullen offspring and one wise-cracking New York prostitute, little do they know that they are about to put on the show of their lives.

"An intellectually engaging comedy of wit and substance."
-- Kevin Thomas, LOS ANGELES TIMES

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Creepy vs copy

From page A32

of her ex, Noah (Martin Henderson), who has a high-tech video editing facility. Ryuji is psychic and can detect the presence of supernatural beings, while Noah must only rely on his wits.

Although Ryuji is more composed than Noah, the American remake scores a point for depicting Rachel as a woman less dependent on her man, as compared to Reiko.

Other changes

Reiko's son Yoichi (Rikiya Otaka) is silent most of the time and possesses a psychic ability like his father. Aidan Keller (David Dorfman), in contrast, talks a lot to Rachel. Aidan draws many eerie and abstract figures for no apparent reason.

Verbinski and Kruger have made other modifications to set their version apart from the original. Aside from browsing through old publications, Rachel also uses the Internet in her research, while Reiko and Ryuji patiently scan the pages of library references. Noah uses a digital camera to take Rachel's pictures; Ryuji takes his ex-wife's pictures with a Polaroid camera.

The Japanese version obviously has a smaller budget compared to its Hollywood counterpart. Although no bloodshed is shown and very little horror actually occurs onscreen, Nakata and Takahashi's work is an intelligently crafted and severely disturbing movie.

Despite its slow pace, it manages to sustain the viewer's interest. It also helps that Asians are more superstitious than their Western counterparts, thus giving "Ringu" added appeal and edge over "The Ring."

The US remake offers an endless explanation of the phenomenon. Viewers who are used to being spoon-fed might find it more entertaining since they do not have to figure out most parts of the story by themselves. Joining them are moviegoers who scoff at movies with subtitles.

Gallaga . . .

From page A32

(MTRCB) nearly gave "Oro, Plata, Mata", an X-rating for its one-night special screening, according to Flip executive editor **Roby Alampay**.

The review committee reportedly cited the pumping scene and frontal nudity, which could have merited "Oro, Plata, Mata" an X-rating.

"But we assured the censors that the film would not be reissued in theaters," Alampay explains. "The permit is good only for the one-night screening."

The "Oro, Plata, Mata" event tomorrow night will be graced by the other stars of the film, such as **Cherie Gil, Mitch Valdez, Sandy Andolong, Liza Lorena, Lorli Villanueva, Mely Mallari** and Abbo de la Cruz.

Joey Reyes and Don Escudero will also be in attendance.

The Flip Movie Club is a monthly offering of Flip Magazine for its readers. It started with the screening of **Lav Diaz's** "Batang Westside," followed by the Mexican film, "Amores Perros," which was nominated in the Oscar best foreign film category in 2000.

Next month, Flip will sponsor the screening of "Temptation Island." Other cinema classics and art house films will be screened in the coming months.

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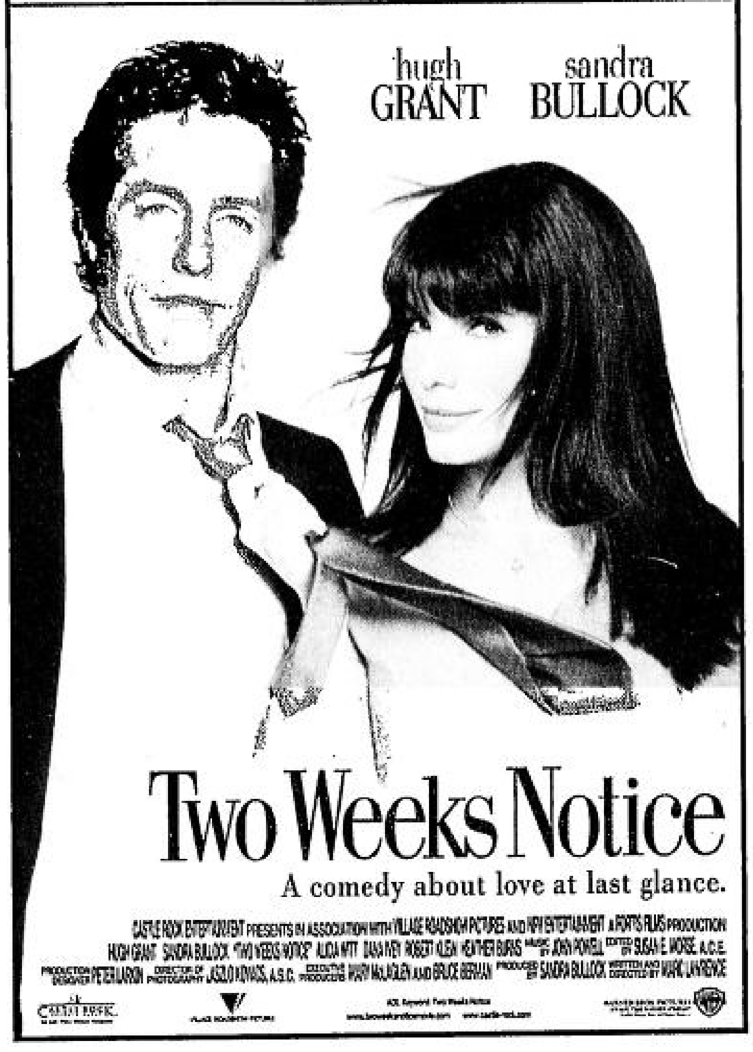

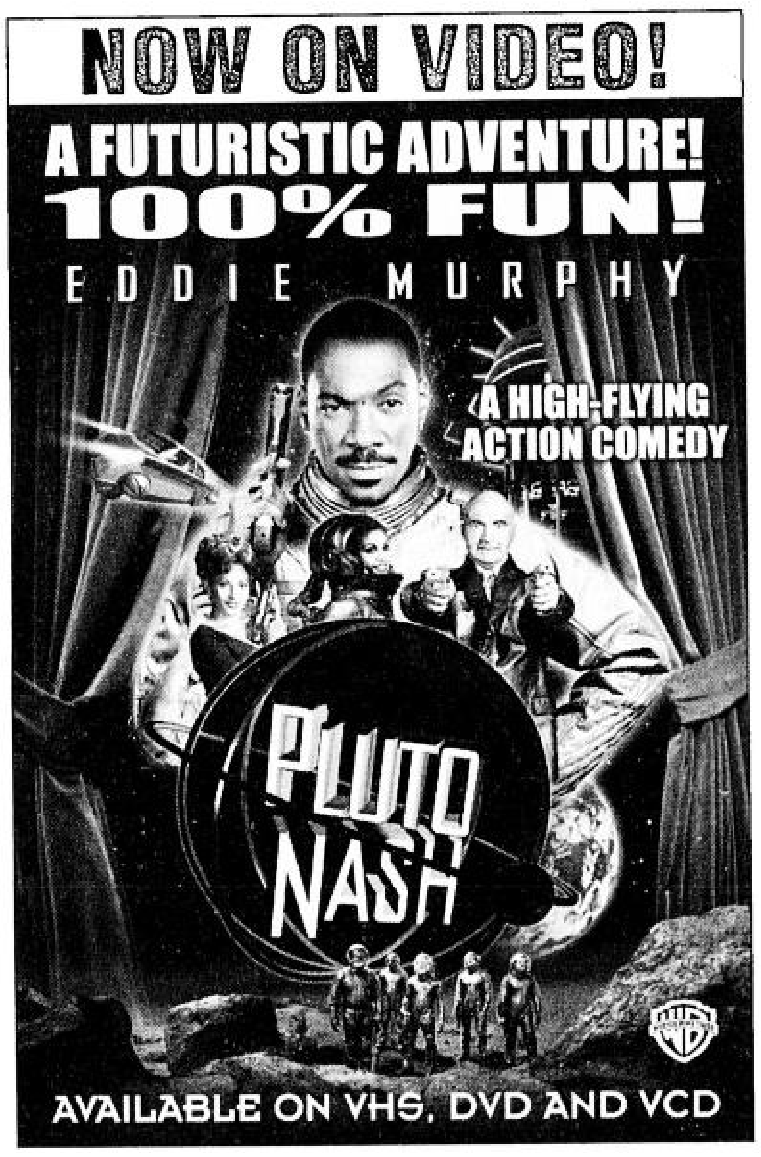
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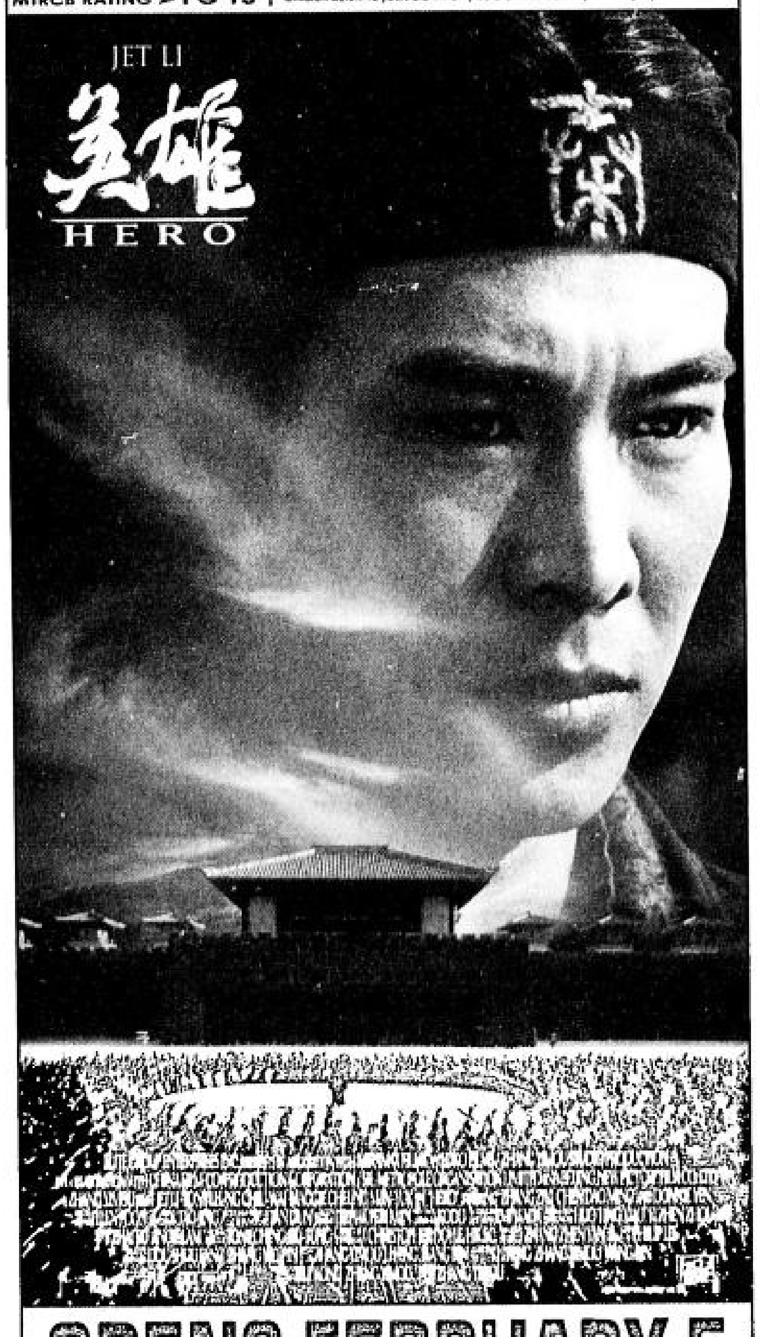

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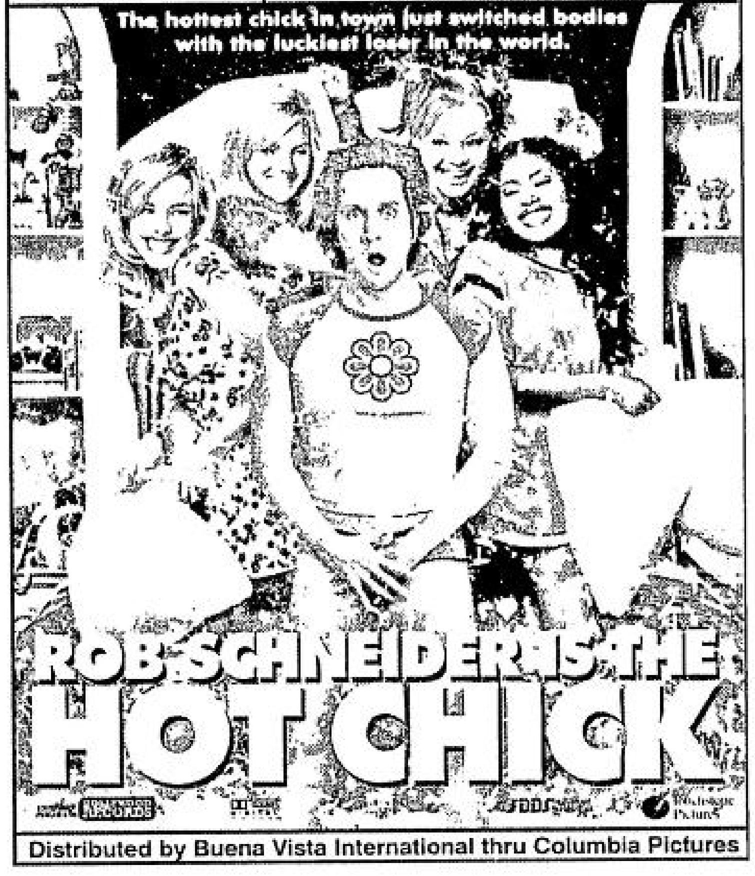
The hottest chick in town just switched bodies with the luckiest loser in the world.
ROB SCHNEIDER IS THE HOT CHICK

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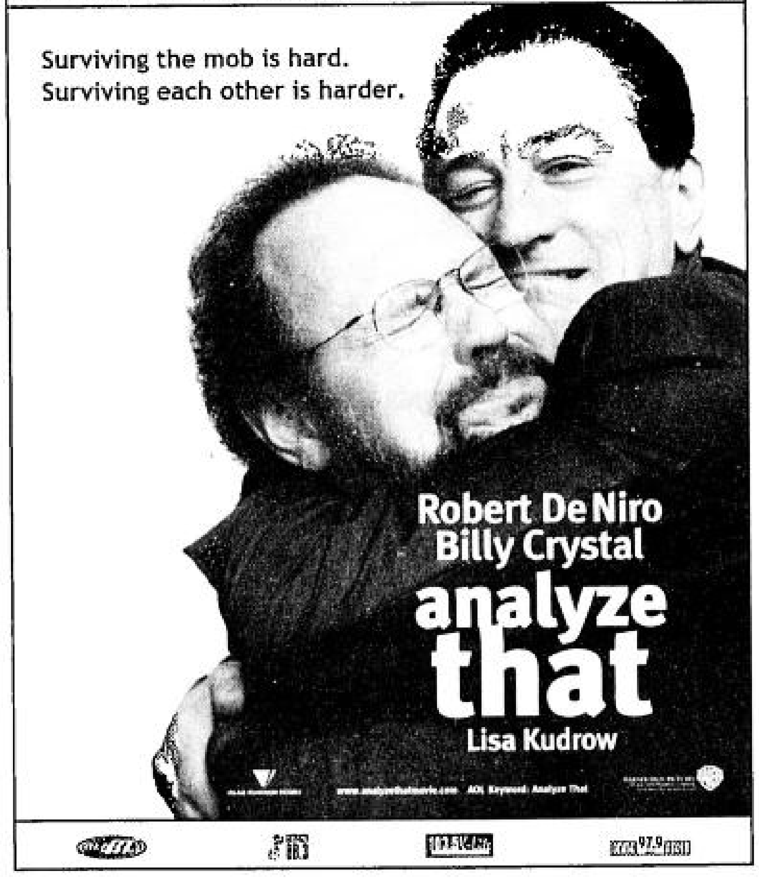
Surviving the mob is hard.
Surviving each other is harder.
Robert De Niro
Billy Crystal
analyze that
Lisa Kudrow

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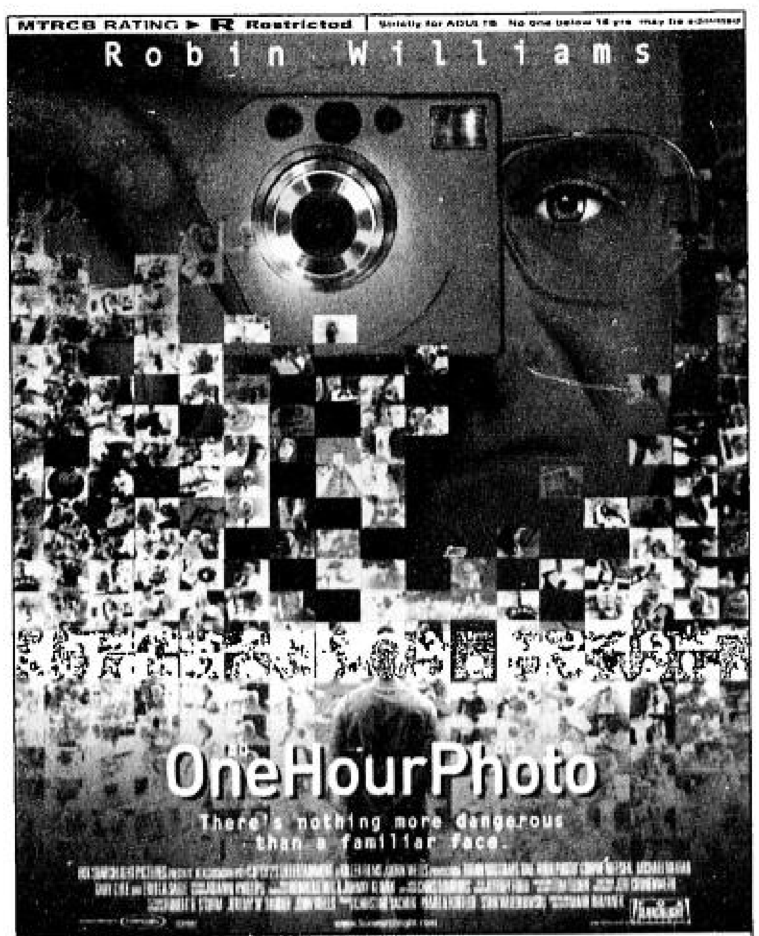
Robin Williams
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NOW SHOWING

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SUKDULAN
Ali 2	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 3	CATCH ME IF U CAN
Ali 4	FEMME FATALE
Ali 5	HOT CHICK
Ali 6	TRY SEVENTEEN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	8 MILE
Farmers 2	THE RING
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 3 & 5	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
FEB 15	LANI MISALUCHA CONCERT
FEB 18	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
JAN. 29	10 AM / 3 PM
JAN. 30	10 AM / 3 PM
JAN. 31	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	ALIAS BOMBA QUEEN / EROTIC DIARIES
ODEON	BANGKERO
ODEON-2	PAKAWALANG PUSO / APOY SA MAGDAMAG
ROBEN	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	FRAILTY / BALLISTIC
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	DERAITED / BLISS FOR PLEASURE
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR-2	BANGKERO
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SUKDULAN
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	UK FILM FESTIVAL
CINEMA-2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	8 MILE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ONE HOUR PHOTO
CINEMA-6	BANGKERO
CINEMA-7	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-8	THE RING
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BELOW
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FEMME FATALLE
CINEMA-12	TRY SEVENTEEN
CINEMA-14	MAGNIFICO
CINEMA-15	SUKDULAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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HOT CHICK P13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	ANALYZE THAT P13 1:30,3:35,5:40, 7:45,9:50	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN P13 11:10,2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30

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'CATCH ME IF YOU CAN'

The unpredictable Mr. Spielberg

By Oliver Pulumbarit
Contributor

LEONARDO DiCaprio plays an extremely talented con artist Frank Abagnale Jr. in his latest movie. There's something frightening about it: It was inspired by true events.

The exploits of the real Abagnale in the '60s get top-caliber treatment from director Steven Spielberg himself from a screenplay by Jeff Nathanson. To make things even more interesting, the composite character of FBI Agent Carl Hanratty is thrown in, played by actor's actor Tom Hanks, the persistent cat to Abagnale's mouse.

REVIEW

The deceptiveness characterizing Abagnale's teenage scoundrel years is revealed to be second-nature. He pretends to be a French teacher when the opportunity calls for it, when he is actually just a new student in the same school. But his parents' impending divorce forces him to run away, and this brings to the fore his cunning survival instincts. He display a gift for forgery and smooth talk and gets away with personally-made bogus checks and wicked charm.

But it doesn't stop there. He ups the ante by pretending to be a co-pilot for Pan-Am, a Doogie Howser-esque doctor, and a lawyer. He actually researches from TV and mimics the characters portraying doctors or lawyers. In that period, he manages to land himself on the FBI's most wanted list and repeatedly baits Agent Hanratty into capturing him.

Mellow Walken

His pursuer nearly apprehends him at one point, but he poses as Secret Service Agent Barry Allen (the civilian guise of the superhero The Flash) and narrowly escapes. Both men harbor a compulsion to outwit each other, creating a relationship that can only be described as strange.

It's undeniably a DiCaprio movie, and he's really good in this one. The material fits him perfectly. This is one of those times when we sympathize with the cad, because we witness the character's transformation by circumstance. All the girls he meets become ditzes, and you applaud his brass for utilizing everything at his disposal. He knows he's got the stuff, and he's not beyond using it to his advantage. And use it he does. Lots of times.

Frank works so well in the role that it's hard to tell which of his thoughts are the real ones, save perhaps those he shares with his father, played by the overwhelmingly mellow Christopher Walken.

And while we're on the subject of amazing performances, Walken just shows everyone how effortlessly he can deal thespic blows with the best of them. Far from the shady characters he's played of late, his Frank Sr. is a sensitive pushover. He, Nathalie Baye (as Mrs. Abagnale), and DiCaprio form a trio of sad, displaced relatives who must face reality in their own separate ways.

Blast from the past

Hanks as the stiff and cranky FBI agent is one of the funnier and complex contradictions that give the cast its soothing vibe. Opposite other illuminating actors like Walken, DiCaprio and Martin Sheen, he's typically commanding.

This brooding, perplexed character is pitiful but also sympathetic; one wishes he's the one who puts Abagnale in jail.

Jennifer Garner (from the action series "Alias" and the upcoming "Daredevil" movie) is also very good. She plays an ex-fashion model-turned hooker, and her very short scenes with DiCaprio make for some of the film's highlights.

Spielberg's previous work was the dark jaunt to the future, "Minority Report." Interestingly enough, "Catch Me..." is a tale from the not-too-distant past. The master storyteller shows a lighter, humorous side that's still characteristically fused with manipulative characterization. His dramatic moments are still designed to tug at heartstrings, or, more specifically, tearducts. Thankfully, though, there is very little "feel the character's pain," tear-jerker moments.

It's especially elating when a story is told with heavy emphasis on unpredictability. Flashback scenes are nicely interspersed with sequences happening in the present. They all come together rather well, and not surprisingly for this is Spielberg after all. You get transported against your will to a time and place that's only vaguely familiar, but you stay gladly for the time being, for a few hours, anyway.

It keeps you guessing till the end, to the boy-who-cried-wolf's climactic moment of truth. "Catch Me If You Can" is not one of those big studio scams that cheat you of your hard-earned cash. Very few films can boast of a tightly knit cast, with equally charged performances, to boot.

Catch it as soon as you can.

CAT AND MOUSE. The movie belongs to Leo DiCaprio, although Tom Hanks is funny and complex.

COMIN' AT YA. Sadako, the spine-chilling character that haunts audiences long after watching "Ringu."

'THE RING' VS 'RINGU'

Creepy vs copy

By Seymour Barros Sanchez
Contributor

BEFORE the CineManila Film Festival ended last year, there was a sudden change in the movies to be shown on the remaining schedule. "A Pornographic Affair" was replaced by three Japanese horror movies—"Ringu," its sequel "Ringu 2," and the prequel "Ringu 0." The trilogy was much in demand among the festival regulars, even creating a lot of buzz after its limited theater run.

REVIEW

The first episode was commercially released as "Ring: Circle of Evil" before the holidays, and it continues its extended run after a short lull brought about by the Metro Manila filmfest. Four months after CineManila, other moviegoers are trooping to theaters to see what the buzz is all about. It is hard to disregard now that its Hollywood version, "The Ring," is also showing in theaters nationwide.

"Ringu," based on the first novel in a trilogy by Suzuki Koji, is said to be the highest grossing horror movie in Japan.

Mixing urban legends, mythology and modern technology, director Hideo Nakata and screenwriter Hiroshi Takahashi have succeeded in winning the attention of moviegoers who have tired of teen horror flicks and gory movies.

Prolonged sequence

"Ringu" and "The Ring" have the same plot, both dealing with the mystery of a cursed videotape. Anyone who has seen the videotape will die seven days after. The cryptic deaths drive a journalist to track down the forbidden video and she becomes the next likely victim along with her ex-husband and their young son.

In the initial scene, "The Ring" immediately attempts to distinguish itself from the Japanese version. Sure, it also begins with two teeners in a room scaring each other about the video while one of them tells the story of an escapade with her boyfriend. But compared to "Ringu," the first death sequence in "The Ring" is prolonged. While the Japanese victim Tomoko (Yuko Takeuchi) dies a few moments after seeing the TV in the living room, her American counterpart Katie (Amber Tamblyn) is able to turn off the TV with a remote control, goes to the kitchen to close the refrigerator, turns off the TV again after she finds it on again, goes upstairs to turn off the shower, and finally dies after finding another TV open in the bedroom! Perhaps Gore Verbinski thought he was still directing "Mouse Hunt" or "The Mexican."

While the original version has a cynical Tokyo TV reporter in Reiko Asakawa (Nanako Matsushima) as its main character, the Hollywood production has Australian actress Naomi Watts as Rachel Keller, a reporter from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

Although the videotapes in both movies show a woman brushing her hair in front of a mirror and a well in the middle of the woods, the American version starts with a white ring of light and also includes other images. The Japanese video has a haunting noise.

Reiko seeks the support of her ex-husband Ryuji Takayama (Hiroyuki Sanada), a university lecturer, to figure out how to counter the curse. Rachel also asks the help

CREEPY/ A31

Gallaga gathers 'Oro, Plata, Mata' cast for film's 20th anniversary

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS
Leah Salterio

IN HOLLYWOOD, the 20th year of a certain film becomes a much celebrated event. **Steven Spielberg**'s "E.T. (Extra Terrestrial)" was digitally remastered and reissued in theaters after two decades.

The Oscar-winning "Rocky," starring **Sylvester Stallone**, was likewise made available again on the big screen on its 20th year, complete with memorabilia of the film including commemorative "Rocky" stamps.

"Grease," with **John Travolta** and **Olivia Newton-John**, was released on its 20th year.

George Lucas' "Star Wars" was also re-issued, as well as "The Exorcist."

In local cinema, film classics stop getting the celebrated hype after its regular theater run. Until now.

Peque Gallaga's "Oro, Plata, Mata" marks its 20th anniversary with a special screening and a reunion of its cast and key production people tomorrow, Jan. 30, 6 p.m. at Greenbelt 3 Cinema.

Gallaga is excited that his classic film, which won the top prize in the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) in 1982, will be seen anew on the big screen.

"I'm curious about how the thirty-something people will watch it," Gallaga says. "I want to see their reaction. I'm excited that a new generation of film viewers will appreciate it."

"Oro, Plata, Mata" undoubtedly established Gallaga as one of the most important and influential directors in the country. However, while many people are wont to think "Oro, Plata, Mata" is Gallaga's first film, the noted director pointed out he made his directorial debut in "Binhi," which starred **Rosemarie Sonora**, **Ronaldo Valdez**, **Divina Valencia** and **Dondon Nakar**.

"I didn't direct for almost 10 years after 'Binhi'," Gallaga says. "The print of that film was gloriously lost. 'Oro, Plata, Mata' was my second movie. It was originally six hours long, but I was able to trim it to three hours for the big screen."

Filmed entirely in Negros which is Gallaga's hometown, "Oro, Plata, Mata" was completed in two months with a measly budget of only P2.5 million, bankrolled by the ECP.

Interestingly, the film was written by then budding screenwriter **Joey Reyes**, who would later joined Gallaga's illustrious league as one of the respected directors in local cinema.

"Joey was only the second choice to write the script after I was turned down by **Ricky Lee**," Gallaga shares. "I didn't know a person like Joey existed then."

Gallaga gives credit to Reyes, as well as production designer **Don Escudero**, film editor **Jesus Navarro** and even cast member **Abbo de la Cruz** for the success and critical acclaim reaped by "Oro, Plata, Mata."

The film won the special jury prize in the 1983 Manila International Film Festival (MIFF) and was voted one of the best films of the '80s by the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, the group which hands out the prestigious Urian awards.

"Oro, Plata, Mata" also earned raves in film festivals abroad.

"The thing about 'Oro, Plata, Mata' is in the detail and behavior," Gallaga maintains.

He is thrilled that people compare his film to **Francis Ford Coppola**'s "Apocalypse Now." Yet, Gallaga points out "Oro, Plata, Mata" was inspired by **Michael Cimino**'s "Heaven's Gate" and **Terrence Malick**'s "Badlands."

"Oro, Plata, Mata" follows the fortunes of two aristocratic clans in the island of Negros as the Philippines plunged into World War II. Amid the grim realities of war, the two families struggle to preserve their lifestyle and refuse to take the path of decline even as they flee their hacienda and take to the hills.

The film introduced the likes of **Joel Torre** and **Ronnie Lazaro**, who were then Gallaga's proteges in the Maskara Theater Ensemble of La Salle Bacolod.

A few years back, Gallaga wanted to remaster his film classic and restore it to its original condition, with good sound, color and quality.

"I was aware that I needed millions to remaster it and I had the means at that time," Gallaga recalls. "An Ilonggo friend of mine who is married to an American was willing to finance it. The people of Negros were excited to see it again. We were even planning a big gala night to show the film again after it would have been remastered."

However, when Gallaga asked the film from ABS-CBN, which owns the rights to 'Oro, Plata, Mata' after bidding for it, he was told by an executive that the network didn't have the original copy.

"I couldn't tell you it was **Charo Santos** who told me that," Gallaga says. "That would be too unethical. I would not make money from the film, nor would I air it on TV. I only wanted to remaster it, but I lost all the goodwill after that."

Charo was then the producer of "Oro, Plata, Mata" for ECP.

"In fairness to Charo, she was the one who really took care of us while we were filming," Gallaga says. "We don't owe any gratitude to **Imee Marcos**. She didn't have a hand at all in the making of 'Oro, Plata, Mata'."

After ECP stopped operating, Gallaga informs the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) took charge of "Oro, Plata, Mata," which was one of the most in-demand movies in the CCP stable.

"As far as I know, CCP made six copies of the film," the director says.

The uncut version of the film for the 1983 MIFF will be shown during the special screening tomorrow night.

The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board

GALLAGA/ A31

TWO DECADES EARLIER. With "Oro, Plata, Mata," Peque Gallaga becomes one of the most influential directors in local cinema.

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BUSINESS

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House probes $47.8-B capital flight

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE HOUSE committee on oversight has asked the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to explain the $47.8 billion worth of overseas investments made by Filipinos from 1999 to 2001 and why the country continued to suffer from this massive capital flight.

Albay Rep. and Committee Chair Joey Sarte Salceda said the huge outflow of capital from the country during the tumultuous period was a strong indicator of the citizens' loss of confidence in the country's economic prospects.

"An increase in residents' investments abroad implies citizens are not bringing back their money into the country but parking them outside instead. This could also indicate capital flight, as businessmen (probably exporters) do not remit back their earnings to the country and they just invest their money abroad," said Salceda in a report based on a Committee hearing last Jan. 22.

Salceda noted that residents' investments abroad in 1999 ($18.647 billion), 2000 ($15.311 billion), and 2001 ($13.897 billion) were 10 times more than the $4.36 billion posted during the preceding 9 years from 1990 to 1998. He said the leakage has persisted last year with residents' investments abroad hitting $9.628 billion as of September 2002.

Committee Secretary Caroline Cruz-Sabio said the committee would hold another meeting today with officials of the BSP, National Statistics Office and National Statistics Coordination Board.

The committee has asked the NSO and NSCB to submit a study on the impact of the capital flight on the country's economy over the last five years and recommend measures to address the situation.

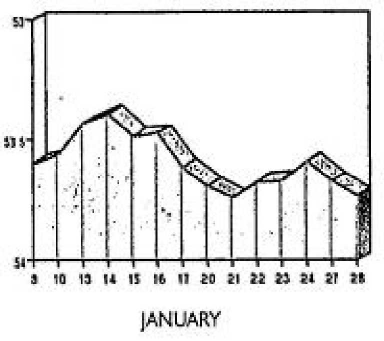
The surge in residents' investments abroad was 1 of 3 items that is the subject of the oversight committee's investigation on glaring statistical errors in the computation of the country's balance-of-payments position. The 2 other issues are the BSP's admission that it understated import figures and the unusually high value of net unclassified items.

"The increasing value of net unclassified items has put the whole BOP table under question since the BSP could not just put items that were hard to define under this item. Its very vagueness implies government could be hiding or lumping some data into this account instead of classifying it properly," Salceda said.

Salceda said there was an urgent need to correct the "statistical glitch" because the entire system was under siege and that more errors could further diminish foreign investors' faith in the country's data.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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P53.73 $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 28, 2003

¥118.84 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan.28, 2003

GOLD: $366.00-366.50

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 28, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Shares fall 0.30% on Iraq war concerns

SHARE prices fell 0.3 percent yesterday on worries over a possible US-led attack on Iraq, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite price index fell 3.1 points to 1,035.57.

This came after chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix said Monday that Iraq was still defying international demands to disarm, raising the possibility that US-led forces may soon attack that country.

"Overall, the market is of the same attitude as the other markets in Asia. We are still in negative territory, waiting for a clearer picture of how confidence will be impacted," based on the developments at the United Nations, said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

"What action would be taken (against Iraq) and what the impact of those actions would be are part of the formula that equates to confidence," Aguila said.

Summit Securities president Harry Liu said: "The market is down because the US was down and there's much concern about what's going on in Iraq. Cautiousness is prevailing in the market right now." Turnover fell to 70.94 million shares while value rose to P166.47 million from 71.5 million shares worth P124.5 million on Monday.

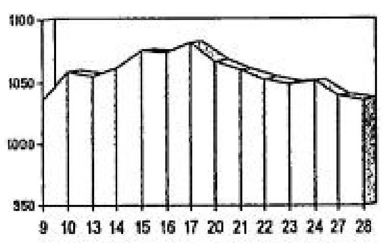
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell P5 to P300 while SM Prime Holdings dropped 10 centavos to P5.

Ayala Corp. fell 5 centavos to P4.25 while its real estate flagship, Ayala Land Inc. stood unchanged at P5.

Globe Telecom slipped P2.50 to P495. *AFP*

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JANUARY



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Asian CEOs confident on 2003 outlook

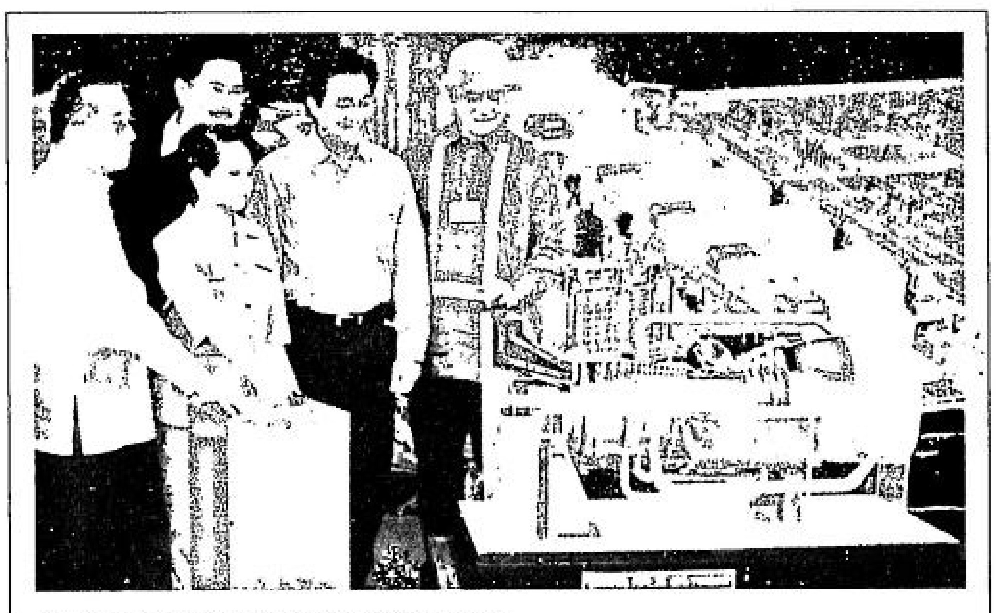
HONG KONG—Three quarters of company chiefs in the Asia-Pacific region are confident about their corporate growth prospects for 2003 despite potential threats to business growth, including terrorism and war, a poll conducted by consultants Pricewaterhousecoopers showed.

"Many CEOs (chief executive officers) are cautious but reveal a growing sense of confidence in the prospects for global growth," Ian Rickword, Asia chair of Pricewaterhousecoopers, said in a statement yesterday.

The survey, which interviewed 992 chief executives worldwide, said 83 percent of Asia Pacific CEOs saw new opportunities for their companies and 80 percent felt that they were well placed to realize new opportunities.

"Eighty percent of them are currently match-

ASIAN/ B2



SAN LORENZO GAS-FIRED PLANT

PRESIDENT Macapagal and chair Oscar Lopez of the Lopez Group of Companies switch on the Siemens gas turbine to formally inaugurate First Gas Power Corp.'s 500-megawatt San Lorenzo power plant in Sta. Rita, Batangas City. Looking on are former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. and Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas.

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OFW dollar remittances up 18%

THE COUNTRY'S close to 8 million overseas Filipino workers sent home $5.9 billion to their families as of October 2002, up 18 percent compared with the $5 billion registered in the same period in 2001. The growth, however, was slower than the rate posted in the previous months.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the growth in OFW dollar remittances as of October had slowed down dramatically from more than 20 percent in the third quarter and 40 percent in the first half of 2002.

OFW remittances reached $525 million in October. Despite the declining trend, the central bank is confident the year-end level in 2002 would hit $7 billion to $7.5 billion, against $6 billion in 2001.

For this year, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the dollar remittances could reach an all-time high of $9 billion, higher by about 20 percent from the 2002 target, as more Filipinos leave for high-paying jobs abroad.

"We are experiencing a strong growth in remittances from our overseas workers as more Filipinos find better employment that would give them better pay," said the central bank chief.

As of September, the number of newly hired and re-hired workers rose 3.5 percent compared with the year-ago level.

Based on estimates, 29 percent of the OWFs work in the Middle East while 22 percent are in the United States and its territories.

Buenaventura cautioned, however, that the robust growth in OFW remittances could only be sustained if Congress would amend the Anti-Money Laundering Act to stop members of the Financial Action Task Force from imposing economic sanctions on the country.

The BSP chief said sanctions from FATF members could mean losses of P1.4 billion daily in terms of trade and remittances flow including social costs.

Of the amount remitted to the country, about 80 percent was coursed through banks in the United States.

The lengthy process of sending remittances, according to Buenaventura, will become more complicated if sanctions would be imposed on the country.

Despite the substantial dollars wired by Filipino workers to their families, the peso remained volatile since the start of the second half of 2002 due to uncertainties over the government's budget deficit as well as the rising tension in the Middle East.

The peso averaged at 53.50 to $1 in December.

URC obtains fresh funds worth $125M

THE GOKONGWEIS' branded food unit Universal Robina Corp. has finalized $125 million in fresh fund-raising through a five-year bond issue by an offshore unit, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The offering was priced at par with a 9-percent coupon to yield 618 basis points over US Treasuries on Monday.

URC assistant corporate secretary Rosalinda Rivera told the PSE that the borrowing was done through subsidiary URC Philippines Ltd.

"URC has agreed that the extent of its participation in the bond offering by its foreign subsidiary shall be as a guarantor," Rivera said.

The offering, which was handled by ING Baring and Salomon Smith Barney, was within URC's expected size of $100-$150 million.

The pricing stood at a premium of about 100 basis points over the Philippine government's comparative 8.875 percent due in 2008 and was about the same level as a similarly sized bond float completed by parent firm JG Summit Holdings Inc.

Doris C. Dumlao

DTI to probe dumping of sulfuric acid, cartons

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LEADING local manufacturers of sulfuric acid and corrugated cartons have asked the Department of Trade and Industry to block competing imports being brought into the domestic market at cutthroat prices.

LMG Chemicals Corp. and the Philippine Industrial Paper Packaging Industry (Pippi) have petitioned for the filing of anti-dumping duties on sulfuric acid imports from Japan and corrugating medium-waste-based materials from Thailand.

LMG claimed it had to contend with the price undercutting by importers of sulfuric acid imported from Japan while Pippi said the influx of corrugating medium from Thailand had resulted to shrinking sales, production and capacity utilization.

Sulfuric acid is mainly an oxidizing and dehydrating agent for organic compound and is widely used by a number of industries such as fertilizer and steel, food and chemicals.

The corrugating medium is used as packaging material for a broad spectrum of products such as appliances, computers, telephone, garments, handicraft and food.

The two companies, however, have to prove that the imports from Japan and Thailand were being sold way below their domestic market prices and that they have suffered directly from the unfair competition.

Those who avail themselves of anti-dumping protection should furnish the DTI with economic data such as price effect, market share, profit and loss, inventory levels, capacity utilization, productivity and employment.

Some companies have lost anti-dumping cases mainly because they failed to establish that their losses were caused directly by competing imports.

The Anti-Dumping Law or Republic Act No. 8752 is one of the safety nets adopted by the government to protect local industries from the harsh impact of trade liberalization.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, January 28, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17	17	7,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	35.5	36	35.5	36.5	76,500
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	1,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30	30	29.5	30	440,100
Phil. Savings Bank	28	28	28	28	10,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Sun Life Financial Serv.	970	970	970	970	400
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.25	13.25	13	13	5,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	1,000,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	497.5	500	495	495	30,620
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.14	0.16	0.14	0.16	620,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	2,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	100,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	300	300	297.5	300	96,390
Philweb Corp.	.0110	0.011	0.011	0.011	7,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	34,000
Manila Electric Co. B	11.75	12.25	11.5	12.25	1,642,600
Petron Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	1,096,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	540,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.52	1.54	372,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.42	2.4	2.4	302,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.18	2.2	2.18	2.18	120,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17.25	16.75	17	130,500
RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	40,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57	57	57	34,500
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63.5	63	63.5	85,400
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.15	4.25	3,492,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.34	2.34	80,300
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.14	590,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	510,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	400,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	9	9	9	9	231,000
Ionics Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	70,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	756,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	90,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	1,210,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	150,000
Music Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.085	0.085	600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	700,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	1,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	10,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	30,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	50,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	161,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	260,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	150,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.44	0.52	0.44	0.52	3,660,000
Manila Jockey Club	8	8	8	8	2,000
Mondragon Intl Phils, Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13.5	13.5	13	13	127,600
Jollibee Warrants	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	41,700
WGA-Preferred	5	5	5	5	11,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	4,497,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	60,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	230,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	2,320,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.9	0.92	0.9	0.92	2,130,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	7,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	3,812,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	5,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	2,100,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.245	0.245	0.24	0.24	660,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	500,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	400,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	9,000,000
Pacifica	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	10,000,000

CURRENCIES

Jan. 28, 2003

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.921065	1.000000	53.619000
Japan	Yen	0.007780	0.008447	0.452900
United Kingdom	Pound	1.508151	1.637400	87.795800
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118097	0.128218	6.874900
Switzerland	Franc	0.681009	0.739372	39.644400
Canada	Dollar	0.603581	0.655308	35.137000
Singapore	Dollar	0.532284	0.577901	30.986500
Australia	Dollar	0.542793	0.589310	31.598200
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.423855	2.631579	141.102600
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.245618	0.266667	14.298400
Brunei	Dollar	0.530751	0.576236	30.897200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000112	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.021586	0.023436	1.256600
UAE	Dirham	0.250780	0.272272	14.599000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.085700	58.214100
Argentina	Peso	0.281671	0.305810	16.397200
Brazil	Real	0.254157	0.275938	14.795500
Denmark	Kroner	0.134419	0.145939	7.825100
India	Rupee	0.019270	0.020921	1.121800
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.242418	0.263193	14.112100
Mexico	New Peso	0.084587	0.091836	4.924200
New Zealand	Dollar	0.505468	0.548787	29.425400
Norway	Kroner	0.133483	0.144923	7.770600
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015848	0.017206	0.922600
South Africa	Rand	0.105627	0.114679	6.149000
Korea	Won	0.000794	0.000862	0.046200
Sweden	Kroner	0.108238	0.117514	6.301000
Syria	Pound	0.017884	0.019417	1.041100
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026767	0.029061	1.558200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000480	0.000521	0.027900

Belgian firm keen on taking over Mimosa

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Belgian Prince Adrien de Merode said his company was interested in taking over the operation of the 215-hectare Mimosa Leisure Estate.

The company, Beauwal AG, is also building one of Asia's biggest convention centers here.

De Merode disclosed this in a press conference on Sunday after Clark Development Corp. (CDC) officials briefed him and his party on the investment status and opportunities in this 4,400-hectare former American military base.

He said Beauwal AG was "considering the possibility" of taking over Mimosa because of its existing rest and recreational facilities that would complement the planned convention center for international gatherings.

He said his company, together with its business partners, would pursue projects here that would "create a world-class business and leisure destination place."

But De Merode clarified that his firm's discussions with the CDC were still "exploratory," adding that it would be premature to talk about the finances that would be involved in its investment plan here.

"It would not be wise at this stage to start talking about figures because we are not yet in the phase or position where we can announce what kind of project we have. We have our own estimates or figures but we do not wish to release any of these," he told reporters.

THE SCENIC Mimosa golf course

De Merode said the convention center would be complemented by "recreational facilities for families" which would also be either built or operated by his firm.

He said operating Mimosa was one of the business ventures being considered by his company.

De Merode served as manager of several international banks and financial groups, including Belgium's Generale de Banque, the Societe Generale de Belgique, and the Bank Degroof Belgium.

Victor Jose Luciano, CDC executive vice president, said Beauwal AG is "financially capable" of taking over Mimosa's operation.

CDC has been operating Mimosa since December 1999 when it took over the leisure estate from the Mondragon Leisure and Resorts Corp. after the latter failed to comply with a Malacañang-sponsored compromise agreement to settle its P325-million land rental obligation to the CDC.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

GMA warns of power shortage, opens San Lorenzo plant

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BATANGAS CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday inaugurated the 500-megawatt San Lorenzo combined cycle plant, the country's most advanced and efficient power-generating facility, at Barangay Sta. Rita, this city, marking the completion of the all power-generating facilities required for the Philippine gas-to-power project.

The President congratulated First Gas Power Corp., the developer of San Lorenzo Power plant, for its contribution to nation-building.

"A stable energy supply is an important factor of a strong republic. This project can produce more than 53 percent of the country's energy requirement," Ms Macapagal said. "Now we know how much it takes to invest in power. It's $1 million per megawatt."

The President also emphasized the role of the private sector in helping the country achieve self-sufficiency in energy.

"This is also to make one thing clear," Ms Macapagal said, "Meralco and the government are not fighting each other."

The President also said that the Philippines' electricity bill, which used to be the second highest bill in Asia, was now down to 6th place, the lowest in 15 years.

Still, the Chief Executive warned of a forthcoming energy shortage in the country, citing the study made by the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

"If we don't act now, we will have power shortages in the Visayas next year, in Mindanao in 2005, and in Luzon, in 2006," Ms Macapagal warned. "We need to act now so that we should not be caught flat-footed with brownouts."

The President said that on Feb. 1, she would start the power reform for the Visayas.

PNB losses down to P1.9B

By Elena R. Torrijos

PHILIPPINE National Bank, one of the country's largest banks in terms of assets, posted a net loss of P1.9 billion last year, which was 54 percent lower than the net loss it recorded in the previous year. The amount was also much lower than the projected loss of P3.1 billion for the year.

In a statement issued yesterday, PNB attributed the improved performance to a significant headway in generating additional revenue and cutting costs.

"This year, the bank intends to post bigger gains in its financial performance by pursuing the initiatives it has started in 2002," PNB said.

The bank said these initiatives include the following: establishment of PNB's own asset management company, launching of new deposit products and promotions to boost deposits, remittance strategies to expand remittance volumes and market share, continued focus on improving return on equity and retraining people for improved service and quality standards.

Notable in PNB's 2002 performance was the turnaround in the bank's interest margin to a positive P457 million from negative P805 million the previous year.

This was brought about by the implementation of the debt-to-equity conversion provision of the memorandum of agreement signed in May 2002 by the bank's major shareholders, namely the Lucio Tan group and the national government. The debt-to-equity conversion reduced the bank's debt burden.

The net interest margin posted last year can also be traced to the P9.1-billion increase in the bank's low-cost current and savings deposits, which significantly improved its deposit mix and lowered the cost of funds.

PNB had also reduced operating expenses by P650 million from the year-ago level.

The savings were realized from lower compensation costs due to the implementation of the bank's early retirement program and the reduced occupancy expenses as a result of lower lease expenses on branch quarters.

On the revenue side, PNB was able to boost by 9 percent its remittance volume and items by leveraging on its extensive distribution network of 82 overseas offices and remittance centers.

Moreover, it sold P1.8 billion in sales of real and other property owned or acquired, generating P767 million in revenue.

PNB also disclosed that it had made additional provisions of around P500 million for probable loan losses last year.

PNB's aggressive foreclosure and restructuring schemes also allowed the bank to cut its non-performing loans by P10 billion as of end-2002 from a peak of P54 billion in May 2002.

SEC orders Tibayan to cease operations

By Michelle V. Remo

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has ordered the Tibayan Group of Companies to stop its operations to "avert grave or irreparable injury to the investing public."

An SEC report said the Tibayan group had used 11 companies/marketing subsidiaries to collect investments from the public without the necessary license and registration.

Tibayan Group Investment Co. Inc. (TGICI), a group subsidiary which is a licensed mutual fund company, was reported to have collected money from 35 investors promising them a guaranteed interest income of 3 to 5.5 percent a month after a six-month or one-year period.

The SEC said in its report that TGICI violated the corporate regulator's laws on mutual fund companies because it offered a fixed-income rate to investors, contrary to what the SEC law on mutual fund stated, that a return given to mutual fund investors should be based on net asset value per share.

TGICI was also found to be selling securities not registered with the Commission, directly violating Section 8.1 of the Securities Regulation Code, which ruled that securities that did not have a registration statement filed with and approved by the Commission shall not be offered for sale or distribution.

Asian CEOs . . .

From page B1

ing or beating their revenue growth targets, which is extremely positive," said Rickword.

Only 9 percent of the Asia Pacific CEOs expect layoffs or downsizing in their companies over the next 12 months, considerably lower than the 24 percent seen in Europe and 15 percent in North America.

About 50 percent of CEOs in the Asia-Pacific region expected to maintain staffing levels, with 19 percent anticipating increasing hiring.

The respondents highlighted the top three potential threats to business growth as being global terrorism and the threat of war, price deflation and stock market volatility.

Reuters

Merry Christmas, Madrigals

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IF THE Madrigals seemed more jolly than usual this Christmas or even until these days, it is because the landed family received Yuletide tidings from their Mexican cement principals, Cemex.

Cemex finally acquired the remaining 30 percent of the Rizal Cement Corp. still in the hands of the Madrigals, according to a disclosure sent by Cemex to the Securities and Exchange Commission before Christmas. (The New York-listed Cemex has yet to disclose the transaction in its website.)

With the final tranche, Cemex completed a three-stage acquisition of the Binangonan plant that began with an initial 30 percent buy-in way back in October 1997.

In January 1999, Cemex disclosed having acquired another 40 percent interest in Rizal Cement "for a total consideration of $128 million." The cement plant then had $31 million in debts.

Both the Madrigals and Cemex are mum on any financial considerations given or received, if any, in the third tranche.

But if the 1999 transaction is any guide, that 30 percent bloc should be worth anywhere between $90 and $120 million. Unless, of course, the $128 million disclosed in 1999 represented the entire 100 percent valuation of Rizal.

Cemex, one of the three biggest cement conglomerates in the world, also told the SEC that Rizal would be merged with Solid Cement, another former Madrigal holding, with Solid as the surviving entity.

Both cement plants are neighbors. The smaller Rizal plant, with one-fifth the year 2000 capacity of Solid, is in Binangonan, Rizal, while Solid is in Antipolo City.

Cemex also reported that its Philippine production increased by an impressive 36 percent in 2002 on account of lower imports that flooded the local shores in the past years.

Going back to the Madrigals, the 30 percent last tranche represented the equal holdings of the Madrigal matriarch, Doña Chito, and her sister Pacita and brother Antonio.

If the market grapevine is correct, each sib-

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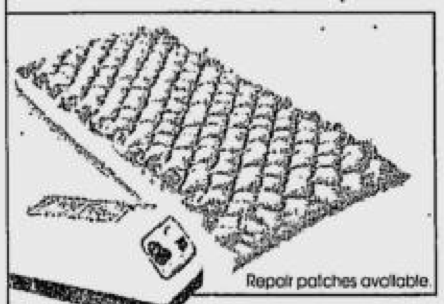

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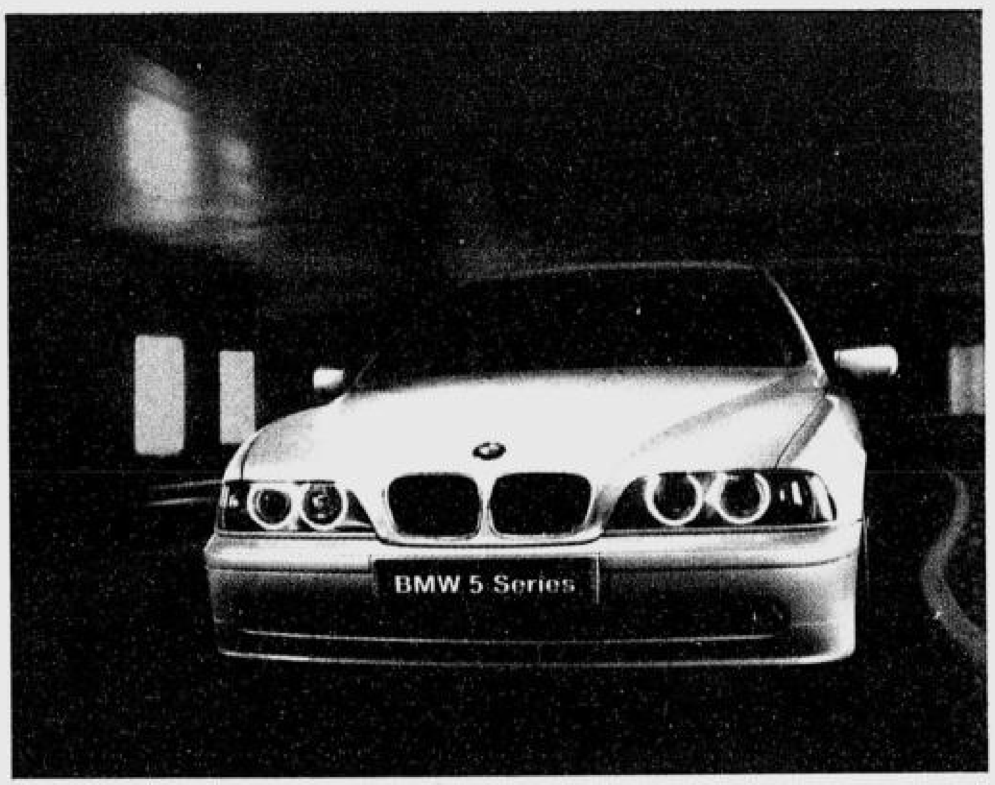

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US stocks fall after Blix report; Dow below 8,000

NEW YORK—Stocks sagged on Monday, sending the Dow index below 8,000 for the first time since mid-October, as investors ignored upbeat data on brisk home sales, opting to sell amid growing uncertainty over Iraq.

Stocks fell for the seventh time in eight sessions.

Sentiment was dented by a growing threat of war and fears of what a protracted conflict would do to a sluggish economy after chief United Nations arms inspector Hans Blix said Iraq "seems not to have genuinely accepted disarmament demands."

Other analysts said Wall Street took another leg down in a recent slide toward multiyear lows hit in October as traders were unsure how to discount the impact of war on stock prices or whether there will be a military strike.

"It's the continued cycle of uncertainty," said Fahnestock & Co. strategist Alan Ackerman. "There's an increased level of uncertainty at a time when the market itself is brittle, with weak technical underpinnings."

The blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial average fell 141.45 points, or 1.74 percent, to 7,989.56, dipping below the 8,000 level for the first time since Oct. 15. Only two of the Dow's 30 component stocks rose. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 13.92 points, or 1.62 percent, to 847.48. The tech-loaded Nasdaq Composite Index dropped 16.87 points, or 1.26 percent, to 1,325.27.

The UN report comes a day before US President George W. Bush's State of the Union speech in which he will try to rebuild international support for a potential strike on Iraq as well as answer growing doubts from the US public.

"Until the president's speech is digested, the market is going to be dicey," Ackerman said.

The widely anticipated report from Blix did little to dispel the fear of war in world financial markets, as stocks around the globe and the dollar fell, while safe-haven gold spiked to its highest level in more than six years.

"It's just war, war, war fears. The fear index is running neck to neck with the price of gold," said Peter Cardillo, chief strategist at Global Partners Securities.

Declining stocks trounced advancers about 3 to 1 on the New York Stock Exchange and more than 2 to 1 on Nasdaq. More than 1.4 billion shares changed hands on the Big Board and Nasdaq, respectively.

Blix, whose team spent two months hunting for evidence of banned weapons of mass destruction, said Iraq has cooperated in providing access to sites for inspection but had fallen short in filling in the gaps of last month's declaration of its weapons programs.

Stocks briefly rose on news that sales of existing US homes surged 5.2 percent in December while home sales for 2002 set a record. European markets also briefly turned positive, with traders pinning the move on talk that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was going into exile. But overseas markets slumped when there was no confirmation of the rumor.

The war factor continues "to overhang not only the domestic but the global markets and the market continues to ignore some good economic news," Cardillo said. "But we are in the final states of discounting before some military intervention takes place."

The specter of war has haunted the market for months.

Corporate profits have already been hit by the sluggish economy, and a conflict in the Middle East could delay capital spending and keep a lid on earnings growth. This week marks one of the busiest periods of the fourth-quarter earnings season, and many companies are not showing any profits improvement.

Freddie Mac, the No. 2 US mortgage finance company, dropped $2.51, or 4.2 percent, to $56.60. The company said it would not provide a 2003 earnings forecast or an interest margin outlook amid a cloudy business environment.

Meat company Tyson Foods Inc. sank $1.25 to $10.24. The company said earnings sank, hurt by high grain prices as well as low meat prices due to oversupply.

Reuters

Iraq uncertainties hound US economy

WASHINGTON—Uncertainty about a possible war in Iraq is dripping poison into the US and world economies, paralyzing capital expenditure and hiring by businesses, analysts said.

If a conflict breaks out, the economic fallout of a quick US-led victory could be easier to bear than the long wait, they said. But a war that goes awry might plunge the United States into recession.

"The anticipation of a conflict may be more damaging to the financial markets and the world economy than an actual conflict itself," said Standard and Poor's chief economist John Lonski.

Chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix, delivering a long-awaited update on inspections Monday, said Iraq appeared not to have come to a genuine acceptance of disarmament.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said Iraq had "not much more time" to comply.

A wave of selling engulfed stock markets from New York to Europe and Asia, with US share prices retreating to a three-month low, London at a seven-year low and Tokyo also declining.

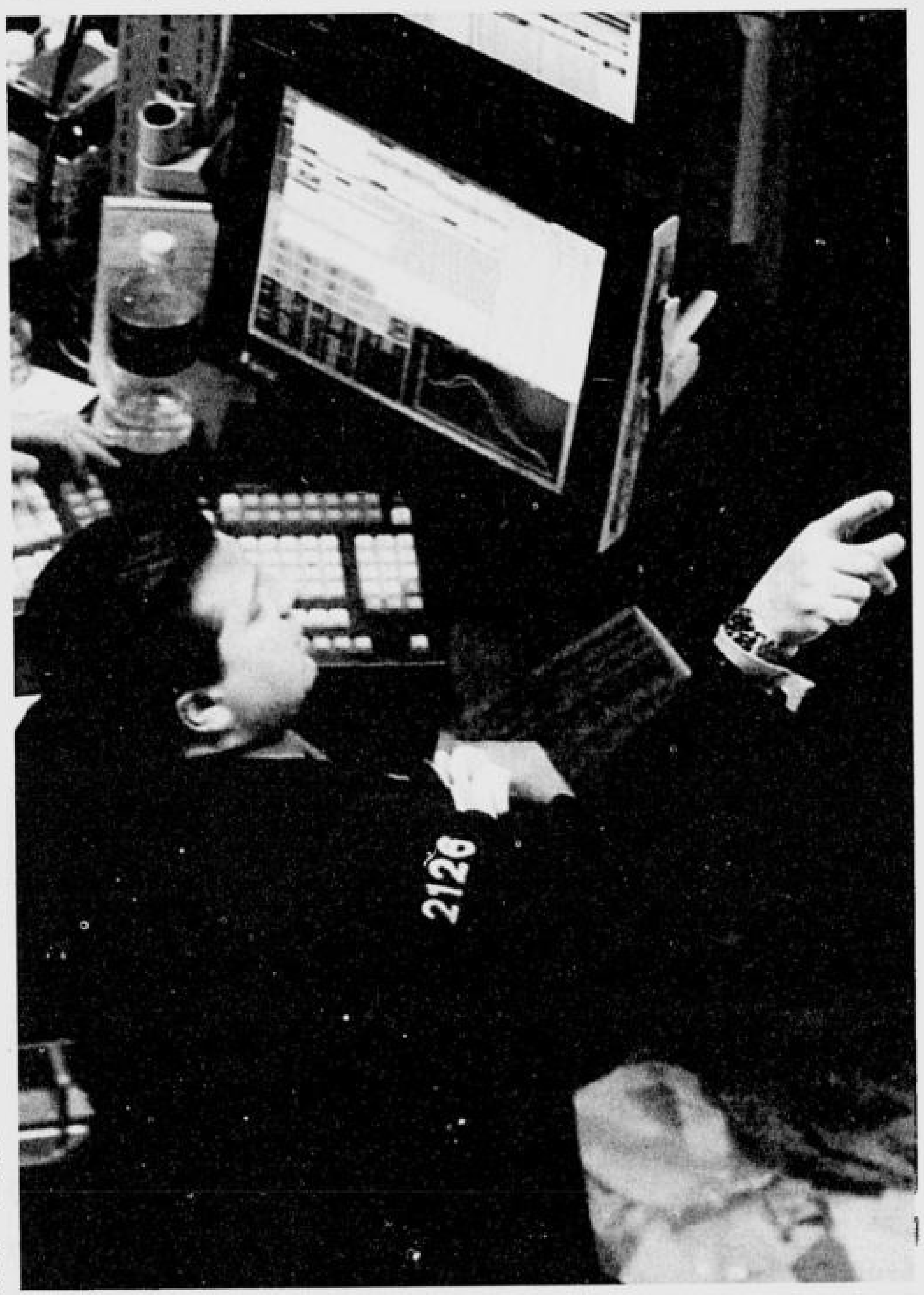
But "I think people are wrong when they say if war breaks out it is necessarily bad," said Lonski.

The impact would depend on whether the war lasts long, whether it destabiliizes the region, and how it affects the likelihood of a terrorist revenge attack, he said.

In the 1991 Gulf War, Lonski said, financial markets rallied and oil prices fell once it became apparent that the allied forces would encounter little serious resistance.

Kermit Shoenholtz, economist at Citigroup's Salmon Smith Barney, said lingering forces of restraint, combined with a likely Iraqi conflict, would impede a solid US expansion in the first half of 2003.

AFP



TRADERS on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange check the numbers at the closing bell in New York, Monday, Jan. 27. War fears pummeled Wall Street Monday, pushing the Dow Jones industrials below the 8,000 level for the first time in three months and sending the overall market lower for the seventh time in eight sessions.

AP

Dollar down to 4-yr low against euro

LONDON—The dollar fell to the lowest level against the euro for almost four years on Monday, but later rebounded in volatile trading dominated by worries about a possible war in Iraq, ahead of a key report by UN arms inspectors.

The single European currency rose to $1.0905 at one point, the highest level since March 1999.

But the euro later eased back on profit-taking to $1.0839 , against $1.0822 late on Friday in New York.

The dollar also bounced back to 118.61 yen from 117.76 on Friday, while gold prices climbed by almost $5 per ounce to a new six-year high of $370.80, but later closed at $368.50.

The US currency initially tumbled as UN arms inspectors prepared to deliver a report to the UN Security Council later Monday on their two months of work hunting down alleged weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Amid signs of a split between the United States and other members of the UN Security Council such as France and Russia, traders were worried that the US might launch unilateral military action against Iraq.

AFP

Fed likely to leave rates at low levels

WASHINGTON—Economists cited turbulence on Wall Street over rising worries about a war with Iraq as a primary reason for why they think the Federal Reserve will leave interest rates at a 41-year low.

The Fed's top policy-making group, the Federal Open Market Committee, will hold a two-day meeting Tuesday and Wednesday to decide what it should do about interest rates. For more than a year, the central bank has kept those rates at the lowest levels since the early 1960s.

In advance of this week's discussions, most economists were expecting no change in the federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge on overnight loans. The Fed pushed that rate down by a half-point to 1.25 percent on Nov. 6.

"It's almost a slam dunk that the Fed will leave rates unchanged," said Stuart Hoffman, chief economist at PNC Financial Services Group in Pittsburgh. "I think the evidence is not conclusive that we have gotten past the soft spot."

Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan and other Fed officials have used the phrase "soft spot," to describe a renewed period of economic weakness that many analysts believe pushed overall growth down to an anemic rate of one percent or less in the final three months of 2002.

The Fed's bigger-than-expected half point rate reduction in November was an effort to make sure the slowdown did not deepen into something worse, such as a double-dip recession.

The unemployment rate has risen in recent months, returning to an eight-year high of 6 percent. To get the uncertain recovery from the 2001 recession back on a more sustainable path, the Bush administration promoted a new economic stimulus package.

President George W. Bush's $674 billion, 10-year plan faces opposition from congressional Democrats. Greenspan provided key support in the 2001 passage of Bush's first tax cut, a $1.35 trillion, 10-year package, but it was unclear how much backing the Fed chief will give the new measure.

Fed spokesperson David Skidmore said it was the practice of the central bank not to comment on Greenspan's private meetings. But he said that Greenspan's "long-standing" support for the elimination of the double taxation of stock dividends, the centerpiece of the Bush proposal, was a matter of record.

AP

Japanese retail sales fell in Dec.

TOKYO—Japan's retail sales fell for the 21st straight month in December as concern over falling incomes and employment prospects kept consumers reluctant to spend, suggesting that the economic recovery is fragile.

Nationwide retail sales in December fell 3.4 percent from a year earlier, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said on Tuesday. For the whole of 2002 they were down 3.9 percent.

Sales at large stores in December fell 4.2 percent year-on-year on a same-store basis, and for the whole of 2002 they were down 2.1 percent.

Retail sales are closely watched as a gauge of consumer spending, the largest and one of the more resilient components of Japan's struggling economy in recent years.

While exports have lifted the economy over the past year, weak domestic demand has ensured that a virtuous cycle of growth remains elusive.

"The biggest factor in December was the decline in winter bonus payments," said Mamoru Yamazaki, chief economist at Barclays Capital (Japan). "The same is likely to happen in June (when summer bonuses are paid), but the months in between will show minus growth too."

Japanese companies have cut back on bonus payments as their profits stagnate and they try to restructure. The payments, traditionally made twice a year, can be as much as three months' salary each time, forming a major part of household incomes.

The ministry said clothing sales showed strong declines in December, as did appliances, while car sales rose slightly.

Falling prices over the past four years have sapped consumers' confidence, and their spending power has not been helped by a rise in unemployment to record highs as companies take a tough stance on restructuring their operations.

Reuters

EU, Asean review economic ties

BRUSSELS, Belgium—European Union foreign ministers opened talks Monday with their counterparts from 10 southeast Asian nations to try and improve an economic relationship that the Europeans say no longer works well.

The two sides also plan to sign an accord to step up cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

Similar to a deal the Association of Southeast Asian Nations signed last August with the United States, the agreement will let the two sides boost law enforcement cooperation to counter terrorist activities.

The two sides are also expected to issue a statement reiterating their determination to combat terrorism.

In preparing for the meeting, EU officials made it clear they want the relationship with Asean to take new directions.

The Europeans are concerned that Asean does too little to spread economic wealth among its members, thereby maintaining a yawning gap between the rich and poor.

The EU will unveil this year a new policy for southeast Asia that may focus more on individual nations that persistently lag behind economically. Also, the EU wants to step up cooperation to counter illegal immigration and drugs trafficking.

Asean comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Burma.

AP

Web worm mars Microsoft security push anniversary

SEATTLE—The computer worm that exploited a flaw in Microsoft Corp.'s database software to cripple global networks turned out to be an unwelcome if unintended anniversary for the No. 1 software maker's effort to make its programs more secure.

Microsoft said the damage caused by the "SQL Slammer" worm over the weekend, which targeted the company's corporate database program of the same name, showed it was on the right track with its "Trustworthy Computing" initiative, launched a year and one week earlier by chair and founder Bill Gates.

But critics, who noted that some of Microsoft's own computers were crashed by the Slammer worm, said the incident demonstrated that Microsoft's tighter chain of security was only as good as its weakest link: the thousands of harried network administrators charged with updating Microsoft's systems.

Saturday's attack on the Internet, the most damaging in 18 months, clogged the pipelines of the global Internet. Web access was nearly shut down in South Korea, which bore the brunt of the slowdown.

"We still have a lot more to do, but it (the worm attack) shows how important the Trustworthy Computing initiative is," Scott Charney, Microsoft's Chief Security Strategist, told Reuters on Monday.

Charney said the main goal for Microsoft in the wake of the attack was to make sure customers were aware that a patch for the security hole in SQL, which had been available since last summer.

"The single largest message is: keep your system up to date with patches," Charney said.

In response, security experts lashed out at Microsoft, saying that the software giant still needed to make a greater effort to plug potential holes in its products.

Although the security patch, which addresses a security hole in SQL, was available since last July, many system administrators had failed to implement the fix because they often required extensive testing before installation, Schneier said.

Reuters

A SOUTH Korean engineer checks the status of an Internet server system. South Korea, the world's most wired country, counted the cost on Monday of a weekend of Internet chaos caused by a virulent computer worm as politicians promised steps to defend the country form future attacks.

REUTERS

FOURTH STRAIGHT MONTH

Manufacturing output still down

By Doris C. Dumlao

MANUFACTURING output fell for the fourth consecutive month in November by 0.7 percent, the National Statistics Office said yesterday.

Giving comparative rates in the previous months, the office said in a statement that the output drop had slowed down significantly.

The continued downtrend in manufacturing production, albeit at a slower pace, was brought by the volume declines in publishing and printing, wood and wood products, miscellaneous manufactures, nonelectrical machinery and chemical products, according to the NSO's monthly integrated survey of selected industries.

The month-on-month volume in production index likewise dropped by 0.3 percent, a reversal of the 1-percent growth in October, owing to lower production of leather, petroleum and miscellaneous products.

Analysts said that as the NSO survey covered mostly the top manufacturers, the output of smaller firms that were collectively contributing to export earnings might not have been accounted for. This explained why the manufacturing output was not reflective of the positive export indicators for the same period, they said.

In terms of sales, however, the manufacturing sector managed to post a 4.7 percent growth in November from a year ago.

Those which contributed most to the increase in the year-on-year value of production were either export-oriented or basic goods—leather products, rubber products, textile, transport equipment, non-metallic mineral products, footwear and wearing apparel, fabricated metal products, food and paper/paper products.

The NSO earlier reported that the country's export earnings for November rose by 18 percent to $3.1 billion from a year ago, resuming a double-digit growth after slowing to 2.6 percent in October.

About 70 percent of the output of the industrial sector is accounted for by the manufacturing sector, which, in turn, is significantly driven by export demand.

On a monthly basis, the value of manufacturing production still contracted by 0.3 percent from a positive growth rate of 1.4 percent in the previous month.

Meanwhile, the average capacity utilization rate for the manufacturing sector stood at 75.2 percent for November, the report said, indicating that there was more room for the sector to increase production without investing new money for expansion.

The sectors that operated at more than 80 percent capacity were those manufacturing petroleum products, non-electrical machinery, footwear and wearing apparel, paper/paper products and rubber products.

Metcash withdraws RP investment plan

SYDNEY—Australian grocery distributor Metcash Trading Ltd. said yesterday it has withdrawn from a proposed A$73 million (P2 billion) purchase of a 65-percent stake in Philippines wholesaler Suy Sing Commercial Corp.

Metcash, which announced the proposal in October, said it decided to end negotiations following an intensive due diligence program.

"Fundamental differences on substantial issues have emerged and remain unresolved," Metcash said in a statement, without giving details.

Metcash, 75-percent-owned by South African grocer Metro Cash & Carry, operates three main businesses—Australian Liquor Marketers, IGA Distribution and Campbells Cash & Carry.

Metcash chief executive Andrew Reitzer said the group would focus in the short-term on its existing businesses in Australia, given the increasing uncertainties in the world economy. *Reuters*

Merry Christmas . . .

From page B3

ling should have added a conservative $30 million (about P1.6 billion) to his/her private bank account, already fattened by the multibillion windfall from having earlier disposed of Solidbank at a premium.

According to the private banking grapevine, Doña Chito is treated like visiting royalty by the private banking unit of Citibank in New York whenever she is in the Big Apple, with a vice president no less attending to her like a personal valet, sending the matriarch a limousine for her outings and flowers to her Upper East Side apartment every morning.

Closer to home, the real estate grapevine is buzzing with rumors about the Madrigals snapping up bargains left and right in Forbes, Dasma, and even all the way down to Boracay.

Finex finessed

THE TEMPEST in the Finex teapot caused by the three-term appointment of Grace Tiongco has been resolved.

From her previous posting as vice president for internal affairs, Tiongco was simply moved to vice president for external affairs to comply with the Finex by-law provision limiting an officer holding the same position to two consecutive terms.

New Finex president Edgardo Limon, who is in the software application business with Globe as bread-and-butter client, apparently was unaware of the limitation when he reappointed Tiongco to her old post, according to the pro-Tiongco grapevine.

Limon's inadvertence reopened old wounds, especially after first Finex president/founder Arsenio Vistro made lemonade out of Limon's oversight.

Vistro is allied with ex-Finex president Rosario "Cherry" Bernaldo, who is suing Tiongco and other Finex officers for libel.

Bobby's new bounce

PHILWEB filed a disclosure report with the Philippine Stock Exchange in late November about its being named Internet gaming consultant and provider by the state gaming agency, Pagcor.

Philweb made the clarification in reaction to a Cocktales item on Monday about the absence of such a report in the PSE or Philweb websites.

Philweb chair Roberto "Bobby" Ongpin said Philweb and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. have set up an internet sports betting website, www.basketballjackpot.net, which offers a numbers game based initially on the results of the NBA games.

According to the grapevine, Pagcor offered a 30 percent commission to Philweb for every bet placed via the website, which became operational early this month.

The minimum bet is P10 or $1 if placed overseas, with Philweb/Pagcor offering a P10-million jackpot, in addition to a daily pot of over P100,000.

Heard through the grapevine

TIMES must be so tough for the Philippine Stock Exchange that one ranking officer last week acted like a strapped public school teacher or a government clerk by selling merchandise right in the workplace during office hours.

The officer brought ready-to-wear clothes in five huge bags and converted the PSE Tektite office for business development into a tiangge (flea market).

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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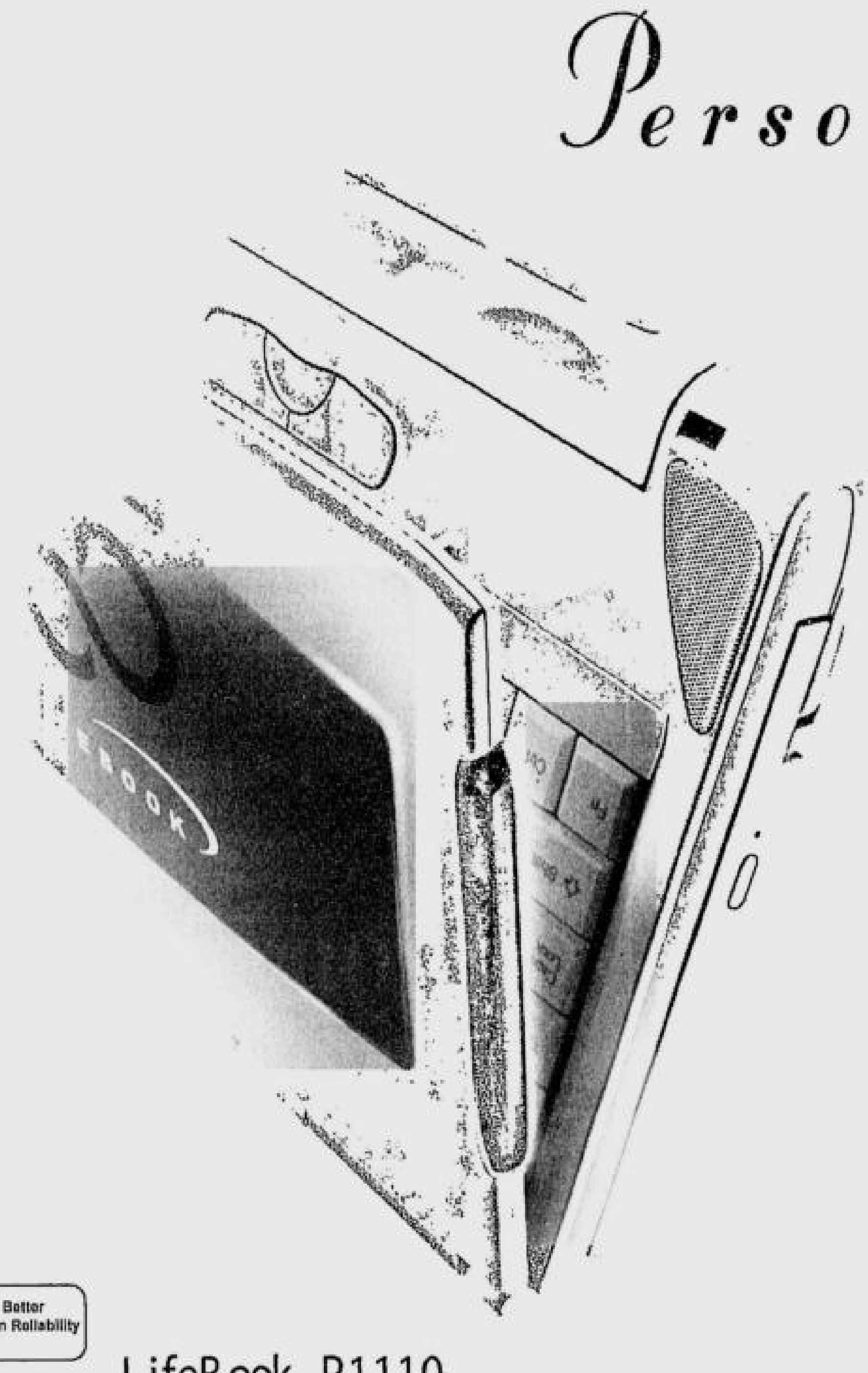

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Corner Lot 10,509 sqm.
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58 Sqm 2 Stry 2Bdrm Vville Thomes 1 Mwalk LPinas 0919-6056686

MAKATI

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Gnhts. new4br 2Mneg 9487112

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★ Ferndale QC ★
Ayala Lots 204-290 @ P9700 & up. Hses @ P6.5M & up terms nr Gotesco QC

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★ Tierra Pura★
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LOT

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RIZAL

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✣IBA, ZAMBALES 10has 40M 500meters nr beach 09192221766

✣ZAMBALES 18has 10M 100 mango trees 0919-2221766

CAVITE

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CITILAND 8
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MANILA

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QUEZON CITY

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APARTMENT

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OFC STAFF Coll Grad/Level w/ or w/o exp 4370454 SHIE

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late DANTE STA. ANA w/ waiver of rights was extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc#63 Page#13 Bk#XXXVII series of 2003 before notary public Atty. El Cid C Fajardo Pasig City PDI 1/15,22,29,2003

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late AMANDO T. BERNARDO with waiver of rights has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. No. 422; Page No. 86; Book No. III; Series of 2003 before Notary Public Atty. Rommel L. Yap of Pasig City
(PDI-Jan.22,29&Feb.5, 2003)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late BASILIO CABRERA has been settled by his heirs per Doc. No. 300; Page No. 40; Book No. XXVII; Series of 2002 before Notary Public Atty. ANGEL R. GONZALES PTR No. 9968971 Pasay City
(PDI- January 15, 22 & 29 2003)

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- Must have 3 years experience in Planning and Logistics
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Requirements:
- Updated resumé with recent photo
- Diploma/Transcript of Records
- Birth Certificate
- Employment Certificate

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY SEND THEIR RESUMÉ TO:
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Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II-B

MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

January 27, 2003

NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to Section 2610 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, as amended in relation to CMO 36-01, there will be a **PUBLIC AUCTION SALE** to conducted at the 2nd Floor, Customs Hearing Room, MICP, North Harbor, Manila on February 7, 2003 the hereunder articles in lots. Said goods shall be available for public viewing on February 6, 2003.

Lot No.	S.I./A.P. No.	Claimant	Description	Recommended Floor Price
093-02	2002-146 & 144	Asia Paper Industrial	294,372 Kgs. of Waste Paper	Php 353,246.00
094-02	R.A. 7651	Real Top Aqua Mktg.	Old Stock Food Dispenser	Php 351,000.00
095-02	R.A. 7651	Valbros Realty Inc.	Various Articles	Php 343,490.00
096-02	R.A. 7651	Kokei Shoji Trdg. Co.	Used Xerox Machines, Refrigerators, etc.	Php 94,200.00
097-02	R.A. 7651	Unknown (Malate, Mla.)	Used Car Chassis, Doors, Batteries	Php 44,040.00
098-02	R.A. 7651	Nila Phils.	Medium and Small Size Resin Plaster Figurine for Restaurant Display	Php 43,200.00
099-02	R.A. 7651	NSG Phils.	CD Rack	Php 360,000.00
100-02	R.A. 7651	Transmodal Int'l.	Truck Owl, Elf Cowl and Flat Bed	Php 218,400.00
101-02	02-010	Celia P. Tuazon	Motorcycles, Scooters, Bicycles, etc. Except: 55 pieces Used Tires	Php 104,406.00
102-02	003-01	Vera Commercial	Christmas Decor	Php 365,904.00
103-02	2002-03	Upper City Multimodal Forwarder	Granite Blocks	Php 527,277.38

Registration Fee — Php 2,000.00
Cash Bond — Php 20,000.00
Payment — 50% downpayment and the remaining balance payable within forty-eight (48) hours for the winning bidder.

For further details, please contact, MR. ISIDRO A. PRE, Chief, Auction & Cargo Dispos Division, Tel. No. 247-07-77.

(Sgd.) ATTY. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME
District Collector of Customs

(PDI – January 29, 2003)

RENATO GUECO MERCADO, SR.

of Magalang, Pampanga
(January 29, 1927 - January 27, 2003)

Peacefully joined his Creator on January 27, 2003 at the age of 75.

His beloved wife **Amalia Hizon**, and children **Ricky** and **Beck**, **Marlo** and **Richie**, **Tessie** and **Danny**, **Rene, Jr.** and **Leah**, **Romy** and **Margie**, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Salle Greenhills Chapel (LSGH), Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong City.

Funeral Mass will be at LSGH Chapel at 9:00 a.m. on January 31, 2003. Cremation will immediately follow at Funeraria Paz Crematorium, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Please omit flowers. Instead, donations can be made to the Renato G. Mercado, Sr. Foundation.

***For the needs of your departed Loved Ones,
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12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027
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Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
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865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City. Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191
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Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011; Tels (044) 764-0261; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
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145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite; Tels (046) 471-3375; 471-2675
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Message of Thanks

JOSE S. LAUREL III

August 27, 1914 - January 6, 2003

We, the family of the late **Jose S. Laurel III**, would like to express our profound gratitude and deep appreciation to all those who in countless ways have condoled and comforted us in our hour of bereavement through their expressions of sympathy, support and prayers.

We rejoice in the knowledge that he touched many lives and his memory will remain forever alive and vibrant through the many bridges of friendship and undertanding that he sought to build and nurture in his lifetime.

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CARLOS MORALES VELAYO

13 March 1918 – 27 January 2003

Has joined his beloved wife, **Adelaida Lim** (†)

Together they will love us for eternity.
We are so happy for them.
They live on in our hearts and in our memories
and most specially in our love for our children.
Surely they are here today, smiling at all of us.

Haydee Velayo
- **Raoul** (†)
- **Martha**
  - **Gabby**

Ronald and **Maria Lina (Santos) Velayo**
- **Maria Albina**
- **Adelaida** and **Luca Calamandrei**
- **Carlos Primo III**

Carlos Jr. and **Carmen (Lim) Velayo**
- **Carmina**
- **Christine**
- **Clarissa**
- **Carlos Lorenzo**
- **Catherine Consuelo**

Angel Velayo (†)

His remains lie in state at the
Capilla de San Francisco
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on 30 January 2003
after the 8:00 a.m. Funeral Mass
at the Family crypt
Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Dr. ANTONIO "DINDO" V. CASAL JR.

of Tacloban City and New Jersey, USA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on January 24, 2003 at the age of 51.

His loving wife **Perlita "Pitay"**; children **Cesar "Bambi"**, and **Antonio III "Ace"**; his mother **Mercedes**; father **Antonio** (deceased); his brothers and sisters, in-laws and relatives request the readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at the Frech Funeral Home, Dumont, New Jersey.

Interment will be on January 29, 2003 at George Washington Memorial Park, Paramus, New Jersey after the 9:30 a.m. Mass at the Ascension Church, New Milford, New Jersey.

I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

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Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
CAMILINIO L. ESGUERRA	Jan. 29	7:00 AM	Holy Gardens Valley Memorial Park Antipolo City	Lot 3 Blk. 1-A Road B Phase IV, Cogeo Village Antipolo City

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY TO BID

The Development Academy of the Philippines is pleased to announce the selection of Local-Based Partner Institutions to implement Cooperative Development work aimed at transforming selected ARC cooperatives into competitive conduits in promoting ARC development in the following areas:

CAR	Tanudan ARC, Tanudan, Kalinga
Region I	Highland ARC, Suyo, Ilocos Sur
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	Abaroan ARC, Roxas, Palawan
Region VI	Bill ARC, Sibalom, Antique
	Dacongcogan ARC (NORA), Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental
Region X	Tacangon ARC, Mahinog, Camiguin
Region XI	Poblacion Crispin dela Cruz ARC, San Isidro, Davao Oriental
	Don Salvador Lopez, Mati-I, Davao Oriental
Region XII	POBUSILLA ARC, Tampakan, South Cotabato
CARAGA	Prosperidad ARC, Prosperidad, Agusan Del Sur
	Tumaba ARC, Trento, Agusan Del Sur
	TAPSI ARC, Sta. Josefa, Agusan Del Sur

Interested parties (NGOs, Academic Institutions, Private Service-Oriented Consultancy Groups) must have worked in or are currently implementing a project within the municipality or province of choice. Please send your letter of intent and company profile either through mail to DAP-ARISP-II, Center for Governance, 4/F DAP Bldg., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City 1600 or through fax at (02) 6312169 on or before 5:00 p.m. February 28, 2003. Please indicate the code "Package-6 LBPI Selection" on the envelope or facsimile sheet.

(Sgd.) **MA. CONCEPCION P. PABALAN**
Project Director, DAP-ARISP-II IDRMEC

(PDI – January 29, 2003)

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY
PNOC Building VI, Energy Center
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, M.M.
Tel. No.: 555-0293 / 840-1440

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY (PNOC) invites interested Suppliers/Contractors to pre-qualify and bid for the following requirements:

A. Project No. : WEM-03-001
Project Title : Surveying of PNOC lots at Bauan, Batangas covered by the Lease Agreement with Keppel Philippines Shipyard, Inc.
Bid Deadline : **February 25, 2003**

Interested ACCREDITED parties may obtain bid forms upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 per bid package from the PNOC-Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD) at the G/F of the PNOC Building.

Interested parties who are not yet accredited must first pass the pre-qualification process. Pre-qualification documents-checklist is available at the said address upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00, which must be accomplished and submitted to PSMD on or before **February 14, 2003 (5:00 P.M.)**. Failure to pre-qualify would render the concerned parties automatically disqualified from this bidding.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid security equivalent to 10% of the total bid price but not to exceed ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P100,000.00) secured from any one of PNOC's accredited bonding companies.

The PNOC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that are considered most advantageous to the company.

B. **FUTURE REQUIREMENTS**

The PNOC also invites Suppliers and Contractors to apply for accreditation for future requirements for the following products and services:

- Office Equipment and Supplies
- Hardware Tools and Supplies
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- Canteen Concessionaire
- IT Equipment, peripherals & supplies
- Electrical Equipment and Supplies
- Printing Services
- Shuttle Bus/Transportation Services
- PABX Maintenance Services
- Plant Rental

Interested parties may obtain pre-qualification documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 from the PNOC-Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD) at the PNOC Building.

Applicants with favorable result shall be included in the PNOC's List of Accredited Suppliers and Contractors and shall be eligible to join future biddings for Company's requirements.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. PEDRO A. AQUINO, JR.**
Senior Vice President
Legal, Administrative and
Estate Management Services

(PDI – Jan. 29 & Feb. 5, 2003)

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When your boss asks you to do something you're uncomfortable with

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: My boss has given me an ultimatum. I have to take action on an issue, but the two alternatives he's presented me with strike me as clearly unprofessional (and possibly unethical). I feel like I'm caught between a rock and a hard place, and I don't know what to do.

In A Bind

Please remember, I'm an advice columnist not a genie. I can't grant you the three wishes you really want:

1. To be out of this mess;
2. To have a boss who doesn't ask the impossible; and
3. To grant you three additional wishes.

But I can give you some strategies to help you deal with a boss who's pushed your personal limits.

The first thing you need to do is a little investigation of his requests in order to determine your own bottom line. The following questions have been adapted from "How Good People Make Tough Choices" by Rushworth Kidder (Morrow, 1995). This is an excellent book whose sole purpose is to help people chart a course when there's no clear right answer.

Is it legal? Obviously, this is the place to start. If you have any doubt about what your boss is requesting, check with your firm's lawyer, an outside lawyer, the bar association or a law school. It goes without saying that a lengthy prison term does not enhance your resumé.

How does it smell? It may not be breaking the law, but can it still raise a stink? Spouses, cab drivers and bartenders are all excellent judges when it comes to "smell test" issues.

How would these actions look as media headlines? Unless you're Madonna (who seems to personify the rule that there is no such thing as bad publicity) it's amazing how your perspective can change when "60 Minutes" shows up at the front door.

How would your mother feel about it? This is the ultimate test-designed to get you out of the corporate mindset and into a frame that's up close and personal. Don't trust your mother? Imagine describing these actions to someone whose respect you covet. Or stand in front of a mirror and defend them to yourself. Can you look yourself in the eye?

Who knows: maybe you'll be lucky and after taking the legal, smell, headline and mom tests you won't feel so bad about following your boss's orders. If so, anchors aweigh.

If the actions are as questionable as you seem to think, though, these tests won't lighten your dilemma. So now you need some tougher options. Here are some possibilities:

Confess to your boss that this particular assignment makes you "uncomfortable." (Most bosses don't respond well to the word "unethical.") His response could surprise you. Perhaps he withheld some information that might change your feeling. Perhaps you misunderstood what he was asking you to do.

Volunteer for the toughest task in the department if he'll discharge you from this one.

Your boss has given you two alternatives, but perhaps there's a third, or a fourth. As Kidder says, we often think we have a dilemma when what we really have is a "trilemma." Artful probing may reveal other alternatives you'd be more willing to carry out. If you can't create these on your own, ask your boss to do it with you. Together you may find an action you can both feel comfortable with.

Get other players involved. If you and your boss can't agree on an action, ask someone from outside your department to help. Perhaps someone from human resources, or the union, or an ally higher in the company can offer some guidance.

Of course, all of these options entail an element of risk-especially if your boss is the kind who doesn't take "no" for an answer. But that takes us back to the "mother test" above. If you don't try these alternatives and just follow his orders, how will you feel next time you look in the mirror?

It's never easy being between a rock and a hard place. But don't despair. If none of these tips seem useful, follow the advice of Mae West, who also knew a thing or two about hard places. "When choosing between two evils," she said, "I always pick the one I haven't tried before."

BOSS
StephB

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE BRAVO

(Mr. Rosner is the author of "The Boss's Survival Guide," McGraw Hill 2001, and "Working Wounded," Warner 2000, a speaker and founder of the award-winning Working Wounded.com & RetentionEvangelist.com. He is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com*)*

Lost in the wilderness of a working mom's world

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

THE IRONY of being a working mom is that even as our lives are so crowded, we often feel so alone. There are more people in our lives, more people depend on us, more people tug and pull at every hour of our life, yet we often feel like that lost voice in the wilderness. Nobody hears us, nobody quite knows what's going on inside us. Not even ourselves.

Caught in this longing for community, I picked up the Oprah-endorsed book of Allison Pearson, "I Don't Know How She Does It: The Life of Kate Reddy, Working Mother" (Alfred Knopf, 2002), and found one of the most honest voices I've heard crying out in the wilderness. This novel brings to life the dilemma of working-motherhood at the start of the 21st century. Pearson captures the guilty secret lives of working women through her character Kate Reddy, a hedge-fund manager and mother of two. "She can juggle nine different currencies in five different time zones, and get herself and her children washed and dressed, and out of the house in a half an hour."

Her novel is bracingly honest, recording the struggles and battles we wage yet hope nobody sees. I'd like to share excerpts from this outrageously funny but achingly true novel. It might give you some sense of community, some comfort in knowing you are not alone.

Running late for work again, Kate Reddy reflects: "It is possible to get away with being late in the City. The key thing is to offer what my lawyer friend Debra calls a Man's Excuse. Senior managers who would be frankly appalled by the story of a vomiting nocturnal baby or an AWOL nanny (mysteriously, child care, though paid for by both parents, is always deemed to be the female's responsibility) are happy to accept anything to do with the internal combustion engine.

"The car broke down/was broken into..." or "You should have seen the-'fill' in scene of mayhem-'at'-fill in street." Either of these will do very well...they are attached to a Man's Excuse and can be taken to a garage to be fixed."

On a rare afternoon at home, after shadowing her toddler Ben around the sitting room for hours, Kate Reddy types off this e-mail to a friend: "You know that I always say I want to be with my children. Well, I really want to be with my children. Some nights, if I get home too late for Emily's bedtime, I go to the laundry basket and I smell their clothes. I miss them so much. Never told anyone that before. And then when I'm with them, like I am now, their need is just so needy. It's like having a whole love affair crammed into a long weekend--passion, kisses, bitter tears, I love you, don't leave me, get me drink, you like him more than me, take me to bed...Drained and freaked out, and need to go back to work soonest for a rest. What kind of mother is afraid of her own children." That's bare bone honesty for you. Are you resonating? Is your own story in that e-mail, too?

Try one more bit: "Today is my son's first birthday and I am sitting in the sky 3,000 feet above Heathrow. The plane is much delayed....Pilot tells us we have to fly to Stansted [instead]. We are running low on fuel. No cause for concern. No, none at all. Today is Ben's first birthday. I need to land to collect Teletubbies cake from the bakery, also to dress my son for his first party in burgundy cords and soft cream shirt....Dying is totally out of the question."

Feeling better? You're not alone. Kate Reddy is just as out of control, just as out of sorts, and doing splendidly. Pick up a copy today at Power Books or dial up Amazon. Bond with a soul sister.

(An Mercado Alcantara is editor-in-chief of Metro Working Mom published by ABS-CBN Publishing. For more tips, get a copy of this months issue with Vilma Santos on the cover. You may reach her at rmwm_abscbn@skyinet.net*)*

BREAKFAST CHAT

Effective leaders break out of self-imposed limits

By Ricky B. Garcia

JOHN Maxwell, a well-known author on leadership, says that the way to ensure success in today's competitive world is to develop leadership qualities in others.

This is based on the belief that the one asset in an organization that truly appreciates is people. Other things like systems, buildings and machineries become dated or deteriorate. On the other hand, people develop, grow and become more effective if they have a leader who understands their potentials.

In today's People at Work segment in Studio 23's Breakfast, host Ria Tanjuatco interviewed Kokoy Reonisto, chair of People Synergistically Involved Asia, on empowering people to become leaders. Here's the gist of the interview:

PaW: Some leaders do not develop their leadership abilities to the fullest. What is the reason for this?

Kokoy: Some leaders have self-limiting beliefs. They may be disciplined at work but not in their personal lives. They are honest in the office and with their colleagues but not with their relatives. This duality limits their personal integrity, which is a core value of leaders who develop fully.

PaW: Has your philosophy of developing leaders changed over the years?

Kokoy: Essentially, the philosophy remains the same--everyone is a leader but they are usually unaware of it and this becomes a major cause of failure. However, the methodology with which this awareness is drawn out has changed.

PaW: How do you know how much power to give to different leaders?

Kokoy: If I had a satisfactory experience with them as far as handling power responsibly is concerned, then I would give them greater opportunities. If I had no prior experience with them, I'd give them power that's manageable in terms of my ability to correct any mishandling that may occur.

PaW: How do you develop others to reach their potentials and expand their leadership skills?

Kokoy: Encourage them to face greater challenges. Every perceived challenge is an indicator of a potential that remains untapped within us because if we operate from our full potential we won't see challenges, only opportunities. As we overcome the challenges, we end up developing leadership skills.

PaW: Even passionate leaders tire. How do you deal with the inevitable fatigue of leading?

Kokoy: If they do what they love doing, and feel a great sense of purpose doing it, then the positive energy of their love for their work will always replenish them. It's like falling in love, there's always excitement and enthusiasm and a willingness to risk rejection and failure, so that one can continue being in love. The greater the purpose, the more energy there is.

PaW: How do you encourage a "broken" person to lead?

Kokoy: Help that person to see that beyond the breakdown may be a breakthrough. As in nature, the seed needs to be broken in order for the sprout to come forth. Great leaders (masters, gurus, saints, and business and world leaders) experienced breakdowns that led to their breakthroughs that brought out the best in them. A "broken" person tends to focus on the broken seed and misses out on what's sprouting before him, which could be his great opportunity.

PaW: What advise would you give to leaders in these challenging times?

Kokoy: If you observe babies and toddlers, you'll be inspired. Put yourself in their perspective. Born with a body without an operating manual, reference materials or Internet web sites for information, they forge ahead learning to crawl, stand, walk, run, jump, balance and learn to talk in spite of all the unknowns and uncertainties they face. Through sheer determination, faith and trust in themselves, self-discipline, courage, persistence, passion, love for growth and learning, optimism, initiative, conviction and many other great characteristics of leaders, they succeed. We all overcome these enormous challenges and then became adults and often forget the stuff we're made of. Challenging times like today help us tap into our potentials so we can lead ourselves and others out of our self-imposed limitations and into the abundant possibilities that we often fail to see because we're uncomfortable with change. When you're willing to embrace discomfort, then, you lead.

REONISTO

(For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail optima@edsamail.com.ph*)*

NEW president for Berkley and Family First. Fernando Correa Urquiza, president of Berkley International, LLC, recently announced the appointment of Luie C. Dy Buncio as president of Berkley International Life, Berkley International Plans and Family First, Inc. The three aforementioned companies fall under the umbrella of US-based Berkley International, LLC, a joint venture of two recognized property and casualty insurance firms in the United States. A graduate of De La Salle University, Dy Buncio has risen fast in the corporate ladder, earning vast experience from such recognized industry leaders as Procter and Gamble, Johnson and Johnson and PepsiCo International, to mention just a few. His most recent posting prior to his new role was as senior vice president for sales and marketing of a leading pre-need company. As president of the Berkley Group, Dy Buncio is tasked with ensuring that Berkley and Family First sustain growth in their five years by building the group's reputation as a key customer service provider.

Top 10 things that make a good manager

By Aboodi Shaby

HERE'S how you can become the boss everyone loves to praise, rather than the boss everyone loves to hate!

1. Acknowledge your staff. When a member of the staff does a job well, make sure you notice it, and acknowledge her or him for it. Don't let the opportunity to praise a piece of good work go by.

2. Never, ever, humiliate anyone on your staff team. If you are annoyed with someone on your team, or they have done something wrong, make sure you keep your cool, especially in public. If you humiliate someone, he or she will hold a grudge against you, and their work will suffer, too.

3. Create a culture where mistakes are okay. If you don't make mistakes, chances are you are not stretching yourself. If your staff is allowed to feel that mistakes are part of reaching for new highs, rather than something to feel bad about, or shamed for, then they will take more risks on your behalf.

4. Remember personal details. Take time to get to know your staff, who they are, who is important in their lives, etc. Be interested in them as people, not just as workers.

5. Don't hide behind your position. Be human and friendly with your staff--that way you will all be able to support and encourage each other when things are tough.

6. Be approachable. Allow your staff to feel that they can come and talk to you about sensitive issues, about inside- and outside-work difficulties, and that you will respect them, and not hold what they share against them.

7. Admit your mistakes. If you get it wrong, say so. Managers don't have to be infallible! Your staff will respect you more if you are able to admit your mistakes, and then set about sorting out a solution.

8. Listen in such a way that your employees will talk to you. Often people feel afraid of, or intimidated by, management. Make sure you show people that you are willing to listen to what they have to say, that they are important and worthy of your time.

9. Be clear in your requests. It is your responsibility to ensure that people understand your requests--so communicate clearly, and ask if people have understood what you are asking for.

10. Treat everyone respectfully and courteously at all times.

Do this particularly when there is a problem! Everyone who works for you is a valuable human being who deserves respect. A manager is only as good as how she or he treats the people on her or his team.

(Reprinted with permission from www.coachville.com)

email: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ◎ Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

'Is our bonus a right or a gift?'

By Tita D. Puangco

Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK

I ALWAYS read your column regarding issues at work. It helps educate me on a lot of job-related matters, especially employee relations.

My concern is about the giving of the anniversary bonus in our company. Every year, it is the policy of the company to give a bonus to all employees. Regular workers get a bigger share compared to probationary and contractual employees. Everybody is satisfied.

This year, the management increased the allotted budget for the bonus but the only difference is that the basis for the computation is not the same as before. Management based the amount on the punctuality of employees regardless of status, whether regular, probationary or contractual. With this scheme, those with zero tardiness got a bigger share. When this information was posted, the employees, to satisfy their curiosity, expressed their opinions about the matter.

The problem is, when this information was given to management, they took the feedback badly. Their reaction was, "Why should employees question management's gift? It is management's prerogative to determine how much bonus they will give to employees and how it should be computed and distributed."

My questions are: Is it appropriate for employees to ask questions or share their opinions with management about the above subject? Do they have a right to voice it? Then, on the part of the management, is it appropriate that they would not inform the employees on how they would come up with the computation or that their basis has changed in giving it to employees? Do they have the right to say that "since it is a gift, employees don't have the right to question it?"

My heart is aching while writing this letter since management recently informed us it is better not to give the bonus to employees this year because of what happened. Do they have the right to do this?

Disappointed Employee

First of all, I empathize with you and the other employees for not getting your anniversary bonus, as is the practice. However, I can also appreciate management's view on the need for a culture of discipline and sending a loud message that tardiness will not be tolerated.

Based on the facts, I understand that the anniversary bonus is a practice rather than a policy. In other words, management can decide on some years to give it and on other years to withhold it depending on the profitability of the company. If management views this as a gift, then it is management's prerogative to give or withhold it.

But in hindsight, there is a better way of handling the situation. As management sees punctuality dwindling, it could hold a meeting to remind employees of the appropriate office policy. Why is punctuality important? It is vital for employees to ensure internal and external customer satisfaction. There is nothing more disappointing for a customer than to know that an employee is not in the workplace when needed.

No surprises

Then, it could monitor implementation closely to send clearly the message to employees that tardiness will not be tolerated. So, when the anniversary bonus time comes around, employees will not be "surprised." The truism is right–people's behavior is often a function of what they are rewarded to do.

On the part of employees, they have to start shifting their mindset. Gone are the days of entitlement. Instead, it is an era where contribution matters, more than seniority, rank or company status. They have to get out of their comfort zones. So the people who come on time and serve a good eight-hour duty deserve the reward, whether they are regular or contractual employees.

Venue for opinions

In a healthy organizational climate, management can create a venue for employees to express their views on matters such as the anniversary bonus. Employees can speak with candor but with courtesy. Management can view the dialogue as an opportunity to further reinforce their message. It can also keep an open mind as employees share their views on the bonus and on other matters as well. The company can then continuously improve its performance.

Often we zero in on actions as a matter of "rights" when in my view, good, trusting and respectful communications on both sides will do the job.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@ pacific.net.ph or fax to 892-2902)

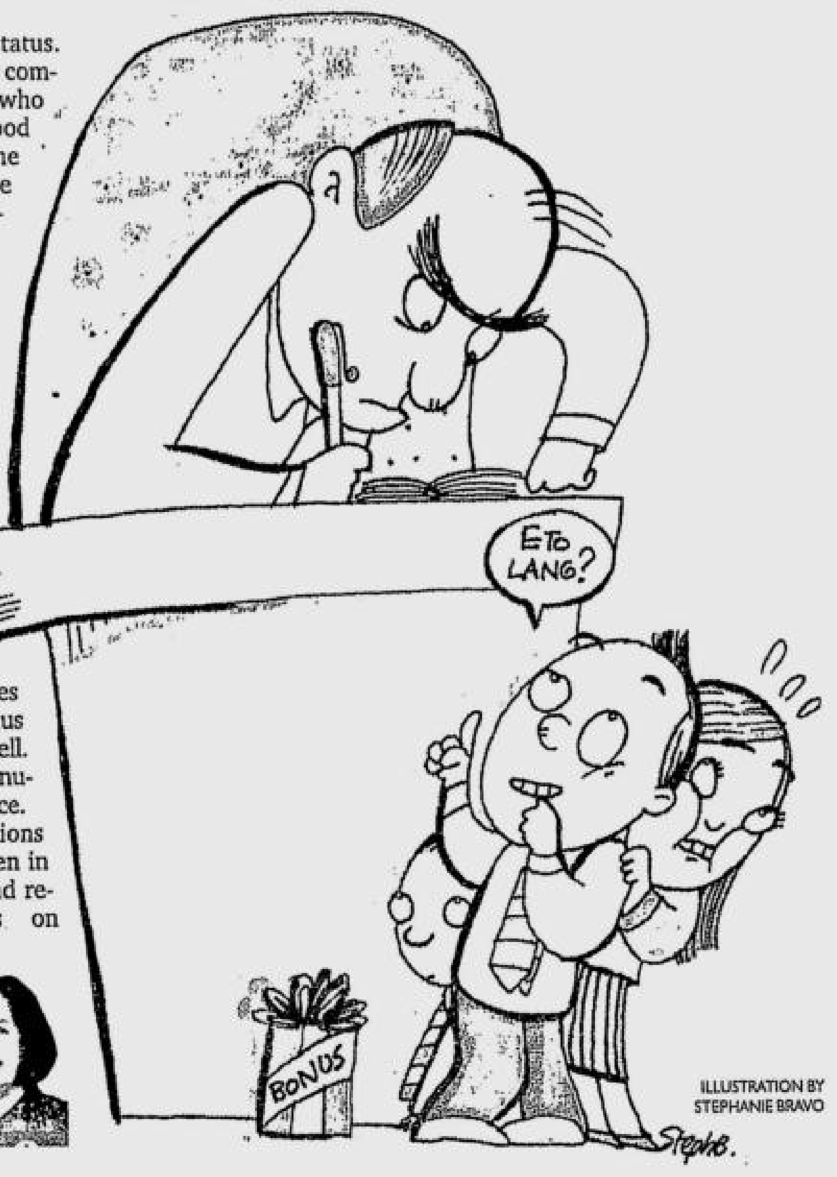

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE BRAVO

Alex Chan Lim

Alex and Felix Chan Lim

Chan Lim and sons Alex, Felix, Rolex and Jolex Chan Lim

Turn Chinese New Year into a family affair.

In Chinese astrology, the goat is a symbol of creativity and is said to be the Patron of the Arts. To welcome the Year of the Goat, HSBC presents a painting exhibit and demonstration by the Chan Lim family, one of the few Filipino-Chinese who are keeping the tradition of Chinese painting alive in the Philippines. From 03-07 February 2003, enjoy a collection of traditional and modern Chinese-inspired paintings done in oil and Chinese ink at the Ayala Center, Glorietta 1, Edsa Mall. The paintings will also be on display at The Enterprise Center, Central Lobby from 27 January to 02 February 2003.

Be part of the celebration as the world's local bank presents a line-up of activities that pays tribute to Filipino and Chinese artistry and brings together the best of both cultures on this special occasion.

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HSBC celebrates the Year of the Goat with the following line-up of activities:

The Enterprise Center, Central Lobby
27 January - 02 February
Chinese Painting Exhibit

Ayala Center,
03 February
11:00 a.m. Lion Dance by the Philippine Ling Nam Athletic Association
12:30 p.m. Chinese Painting Demonstration Glorietta 1, EDSA Mall Exhibit Area

03-07 February Chinese Painting Exhibit Glorietta Activity Center

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For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso ◻ Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

2bU! to be you • to be young • to be you • To be you!

Chinese New Year 101

By Tammy David and Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondents

CHINOYS like us find it refreshing that an increasing number of Filipinos have been joining the celebration of the Chinese New Year. In fact, the feast has become a worldwide phenomenon even more popular than St. Patrick's Day.

On Chinese New Year's eve, Binondo becomes a mecca, complete with dragon and lion dances and fireworks amid a sea of red.

But there's a lot more to the Chinese New Year than Kung Hei Fat Choi, *tikoy* and little red envelopes stuffed with cash (and nowadays, hamburger coupons).

> There are dos and don'ts of celebrating the Chinese New Year to enhance one's luck and ward off evil

ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Variable celebration

This year, Feb. 1 marks the beginning of the Year of the Ram. The Chinese New Year does not fall on the same date every year. It is determined by the Lunar/Solar calendar (the first day of the First Moon), so the date of the holiday varies from late January to mid-February.

The Chinese New Year is known in China as the Spring Festival because it celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is China's oldest and most important festival.

The legend of the Chinese New Year tells of a village in China that was attacked by an evil monster one winter's eve. The following year the monster ravaged the village again, so the villagers devised a plan to scare the monster away before it could strike for the third time. They hung red banners everywhere as the color was believed to be a protection against evil. Loud noises using firecrackers and gongs were created to scare the beast away. The plan worked and the celebration lasted several days. People visited one another, exchanged gifts, danced and feasted on different dishes.

The last few days of the Last Moon are spent preparing for the New Year. Usually, houses are

CHINESE/ C4

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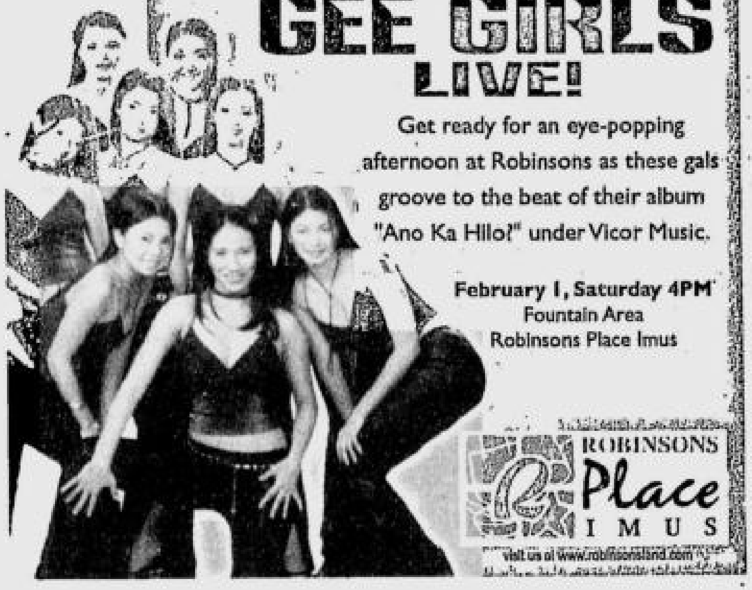

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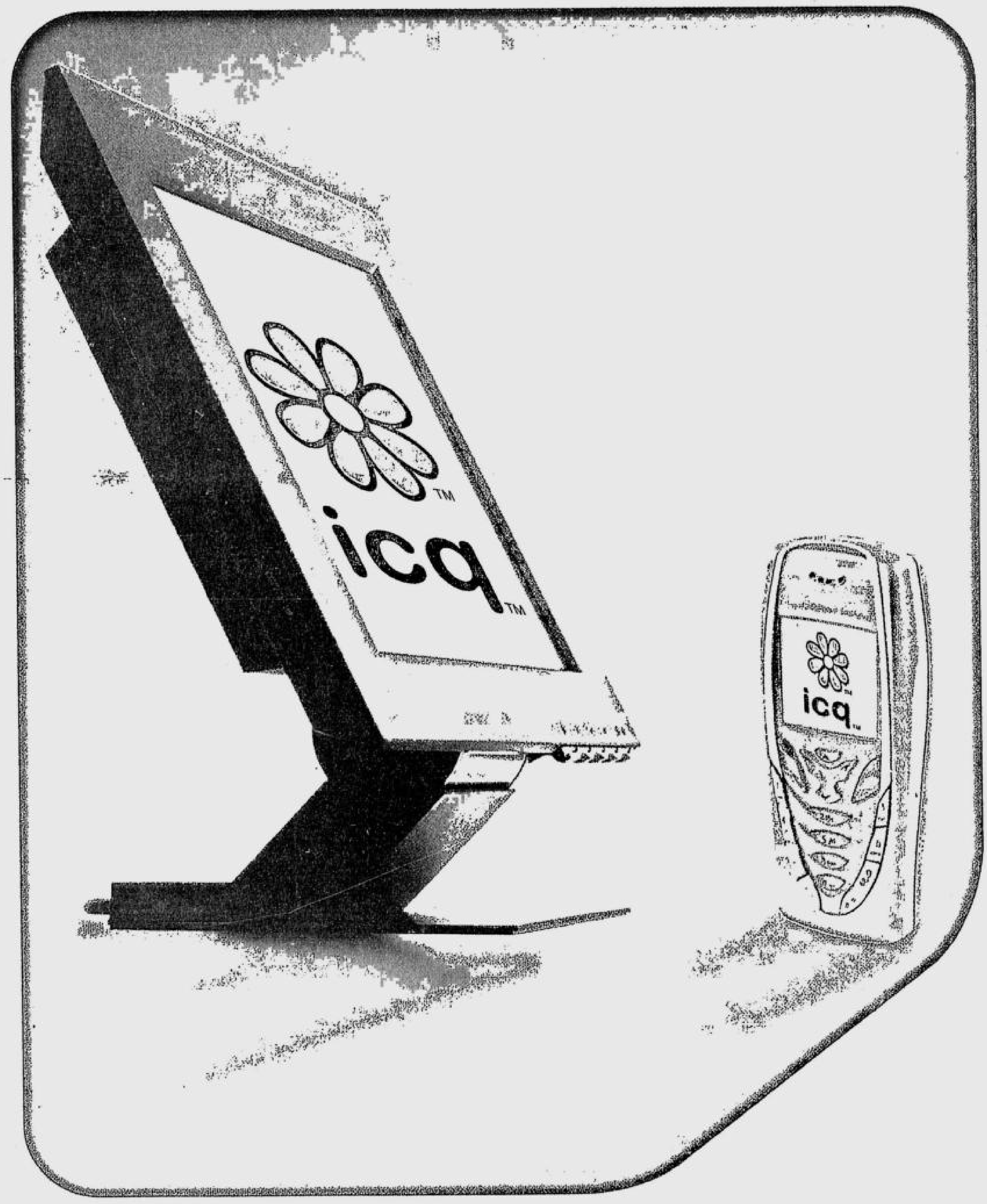

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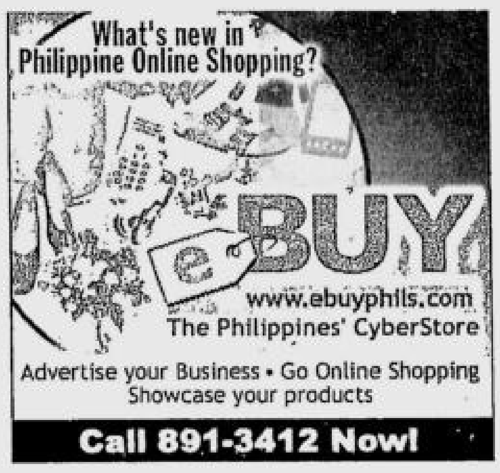

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hbc home of beauty exclusives

MESSAGES

My cordial greetings to the management and staff of HOME OF BEAUTY EXCLUSIVES CHAIN OF PERSONAL STORES (HBC) on your 10th Year Anniversary.

I commend your company's respectable growth over the years. Your achievement bespeaks of the Filipino's creativity, industry and entrepreneurial spirit. It also reflects the continued dynamism of marketing entities in our country. Your achievements, along with many other industrial entities, complement our government's efforts in creating a vibrant business environment.

Your contribution is vital to our country's economic growth and to our aspiration for sustainable human development. I call on you to continue helping our Administration achieve its development goals. Let us continue to work together in building a strong Republic founded on productivity, jobs, cooperation and innovative business initiatives.

MABUHAY!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

I join your management and staff, HBC - HOME OF BEAUTY EXCLUSIVES CHAIN OF PERSONAL CARE STORES - in celebrating your company's 10th anniversary.

The success of your company, a 100% Filipino-owned business entity, shall serve as an inspiration to local entrepreneurs advancing our conviction that the "Filipinas can" even without help from the outside.

The quality, wholesomeness, and variety of your beauty products make you one-in-a-million and a market winner. With regards to the latter, I am glad and gratified because it connotes that Quezon City is on a socio-economic upswing.

Our city is proud to host such a successful company. Remain a partner of the city government in its mission and vision to provide the greatest good to the most number of its constituents.

More power and MABUHAY KAYONG LAHAT!

Feliciano Belmonte, Jr.
Mayor
Quezon City

On behalf of the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA), I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to HBC, an active member of the PRA, on the occasion of its 10th anniversary.

In these challenging times, ten years of successful business is a significant milestone. We are pleased to note that HBC has managed not only to survive, but to thrive as well amidst all the difficulties that many businesses face.

Rest assured that the PRA will continue to work very hard in behalf of its members in promoting our collective interests as retailers and businessmen.

Congratulations again, and may you continue to attain success in all your endeavors!

Bienvenido V. Tantoco III
President
Philippine Retailers Association

May I congratulate the whole organization of HBC: Home of Beauty Exclusives as we celebrate our 10th anniversary! Through the years, everyone of you have worked hard in order to push our company towards the forefront of the retail industry. And on this special day, this special milestone in HBC's colorful history, I salute you all!

As we brave more hostile waters in the future, I hope that we would continue to love this company as our own and to value our customers who are really the reason for HBC's being. Let us work hard to make HBC the leading innovative, world-class retailer of health, beauty and personal care products.

Mabuhay ang Filipino Retailer!

Congratulations!

Rosalinda Ang-Hortaleza, M.D.
CEO
HBC, Inc.

Ten years have led us to experience the fulfillment of aspirations, the strengthening of our faith in ourselves that will prepare us to face the challenges in the pursuit of our VISION. In this changing environment where only the strong-willed that make things happen survives, HBC must be ready to face these challenges.

As we continue our journey, a stronger, re-engineered HBC will emerge. Whenever and wherever we go, right values and right virtues especially towards work will play an indispensable and crucial role in coping with the business and realities of life. This is the banner under which we will rally for the next 50 years. I enjoin each one to take the same path in the pursuit of our goals and HBC's own far-reaching Vision – to be the leading innovative world-class retailer of health, beauty and personal care products.

Congratulations to All!

Susan Mahalo-Loyola
COO
HBC, Inc.

10 years in retrospect

"The trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit."
Moliere (16th century French playwright)

What started out to be just a simple start-of-the-year general assembly for the employees of The Original Hortaleza and Vaciador, in January 1993, ended with the final division of its twenty-one (21) stores between the four Hortaleza siblings.

Dr. Rolando B. Hortaleza and his wife, the former Dra. Rosalinda Ang, inherited six (6) branches: two in Quiapo, two in Muñoz, one in Angeles, Pampanga and one in Meycauayan, Bulacan. The couple, who were already into their young manufacturing company called Splash Manufacturing Corporation, willingly took these retail stores as an additional but welcome challenge.

And so the task of turning these stores around and differentiating them from the other Hortaleza chains began. For starters, the stores were renamed to *Hortaleza Beauty Center (HBC)* and the couple later opened its first post-division store in Realistic, Quiapo, bringing the number of stores to the magic number of seven (7).

By April 6, 1995, with nineteen branches under its belt, Hortaleza Beauty Center was incorporated under the new company name of HBC, Inc.

The Re-invention of HBC

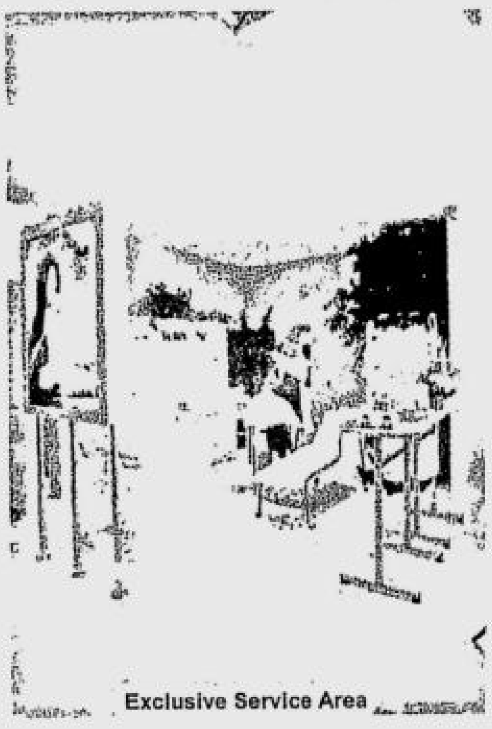
It's a fact that the name Hortaleza has been ingrained in the minds of the buying public as the place to go for salon products. Unfortunately, the old tending shelves and dark interiors were part of their image. And so the enterprising couple thought of re-inventing the stores to give it a more twenty-first century-ish look without losing its identity of being a personal, community-based beauty store. With this, the Hortaleza Beauty Center was transformed to HBC, your personal store.

With the new name came a sleeker and more modern look. Sporting a new logo and carrying more products, HBC was ever ready to offer more for consumers. Retaining the ever-reliable salon supplies, it even beefed up its personal and beauty products line up to offer a one-stop shop for its market.

What's more, it now offers basic grocery items such as beverages, snack foods and essential household items to make it a convenient shop for their female clientele. This is evident in the first new image store that HBC opened which is in Tandang Sora, Quezon City on September 16, 1995.

From then on, there was no stopping HBC. Expanding at an average of 12 branches every year, HBC had already more than tripled its number in just a span of five years. And at the dawn of the new millennium, their number stood proud at 69 branches.

By this time, the management realized that the rules of the game had changed. As the passing of the Retail Trade Liberalization Law loomed, HBC anticipated not only stiff competition with local giants like SM and Robinson's but also with global retail chains like Watson's, Mannings and Wal-Mart. It was in this drastic time that HBC took the necessary measures as it started to pull-out all its big guns.



Exclusive Service Area

HBC: The first retail company to be ISO 9002 Certified

The concerted effort of its 300-strong workforce finally paid-off as HBC was awarded the ISO 9002 Certification for Retail Operations in January of 2001. This was given by the prestigious SGS, the globally acknowledged quality process certification agency.

Being the first and only retail company to have done so, the SGS seal underscored HBC's commitment to quality through the documentation of all its customer service policies and procedures. Winning the award made HBC a certified force to reckon with even with the presence of global giants in the industry.

But their efforts on improvement didn't stop there.

Realizing the need to come up with a more viable competitive advantage, the management of HBC brainstormed. The result: a decision to develop exclusive beauty products and house brands that will strongly differentiate HBC from the rest of the beauty retail competitors.

Reaching Out to More Filipinas with Beauty Exclusive

To highlight this new strategy, HBC decided to rename its stores to HBC, Home of Beauty Exclusives on October 2002. With this came a goal of transforming HBC into a haven of exclusive, effective and affordable products that would be within reach of their customers in terms of: 1) their pockets, 2) the vicinity they are in, 3) their beauty and relaxing needs.

For starters, HBC now has six (6) house brands, namely

1. ***Body Recipe***, a complete line of affordable, natural skin care products which are inspired from natural, homegrown beauty recipes specially designed for a woman's unique beauty needs without the worry of being expensive.

2. ***Just B.U.G*** (Just Between Us Girls), a trendy and fun line of lifestyle cologne that's formulated to be long-lasting for the teens of today.

3. ***San-San***, the affordable cosmetics and nail polish line of HBC. The cosmetics line is enriched with Vitamin A, C, and E, commonly known as anti-oxidants, that nourish, protect and give vitality to the skin to promote its healthy look.

4. ***Hortaleza Professional***, the trusted name in beauty from the salon experts, a complete line of hair care, nail care and equipment for salon professionals.

5. ***Essentials and Implements***, your basic and essential beauty needs in reasonable prices. From paper products, accessories and tools, HBC offers a more affordable yet reliable alternative.

Exclusively at Your Service

Realizing that their exclusive products would very well define HBC's future in the retail industry, big plans are currently underway to further improve their offerings as well as store operations.

And to encourage customers to try their exclusive products, HBC employed its Exclusive Service Program. The program is aimed at inducing trial of HBC's exclusive products by offering these normally high-priced services for minimum purchase requirement. HBC's 84th store (which is at Muñoz, EDSA) provided a special corner for the Exclusive Service Area.

HBC's vision to be the leading innovative, world-class retailer of health, beauty and personal care products is embodied in one concept – consistently exceed customer expectations. HBC aims to do this through their exclusive products, their Exclusive Service Program and a Comprehensive Customer Service Program dubbed as "Serbisyong Eksklusibo".

The Serbisyong Eksklusibo Program is a total customer care concept which starts from the moment you enter an HBC store till the time you return for your next visit. As part of this program, HBC soft-launched their "Exclusive Shopper's Premium" in 2001. It's the HBC loyalty card which offers rebates on accumulated purchases. HBC plans to formally launch this privilege card within the year. A fitting reward to their loyal patrons.

While all these store improvements are underway, HBC is also working on improving the organization itself. In order to keep in step with the changing needs of their consumers, the HBC management believes that the rate of change inside the organization must be at par if not faster than the rate of change outside.

The organization is already in its third year of managing the business through the Balanced Scorecard System (BSC). The BSC, whose proponents were Harvard professors Robert Kaplan and David Norton, is a management system that aims to channel all activities of the organization towards the achievement of specific long-term strategic goals. While still in the stage of adjustment, the BSC helps HBC focus on what really needs to be done and when it must be accomplished.

At the same time, these corporate strategies crafted at their level are cascaded down to the ranks using a Structured Communication Flow to guarantee that they are communicated, measured and implemented.

In accordance with the BSC premise that improving strategic competencies and technologies would help drive the organization towards its goals, the Training Department is now embarking on a comprehensive Competency Development Program which aims to improve current employee capability through learning development programs.

Being Beautiful Inside & Out Is Our Business

At the core of this competency development program is HBC's own Core Values. It is the responsibility of everyone in the organization to ensure that all HBC employees will be able to internalize and imbibe these core values and be able to infuse them in their everyday work lives. These values would be the very foundation in developing a truly committed and effective HBC employee. These core values are: Honesty and Integrity, Sense of Belonging, Pioneering and Innovative, Productivity and Excellence, Customer Satisfaction, Social Responsibility and Faith in God Almighty.

Harnessing HBC's human resources would be just one side of the equation. Coupling this with technology would further ensure that the entire organization's goals would be achieved. With a Comprehensive Automation Plan also along the way to collect real-time information to be used as basis for sound management decisions (Main Warehouse and Branch Distribution Automation, Branch-to-Main Office Information Transfer Automation, Branch Stock Requirement Automatic Replenishment Project), HBC is truly gearing up for greater accomplishments ahead.

Ten years. To some, it would probably be too short a time to prove their worth in this highly competitive retail industry. But for the men and women behind the HBC organization, it has been ten years of sharing and achieving dreams. Ten years of bringing quality beauty products and services within your reach. And above of all – ten years of being of service to the Filipino's every beauty need.

Then, now and for the years to come, HBC will continue to widen its reach in delivering world-class beauty products. So that whatever you need for beauty, and wherever you may be, there's an HBC within your reach. This is our commitment. This is our promise.

by Ma. Ralynn Cortez-Fabian

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Chinese New Year 101

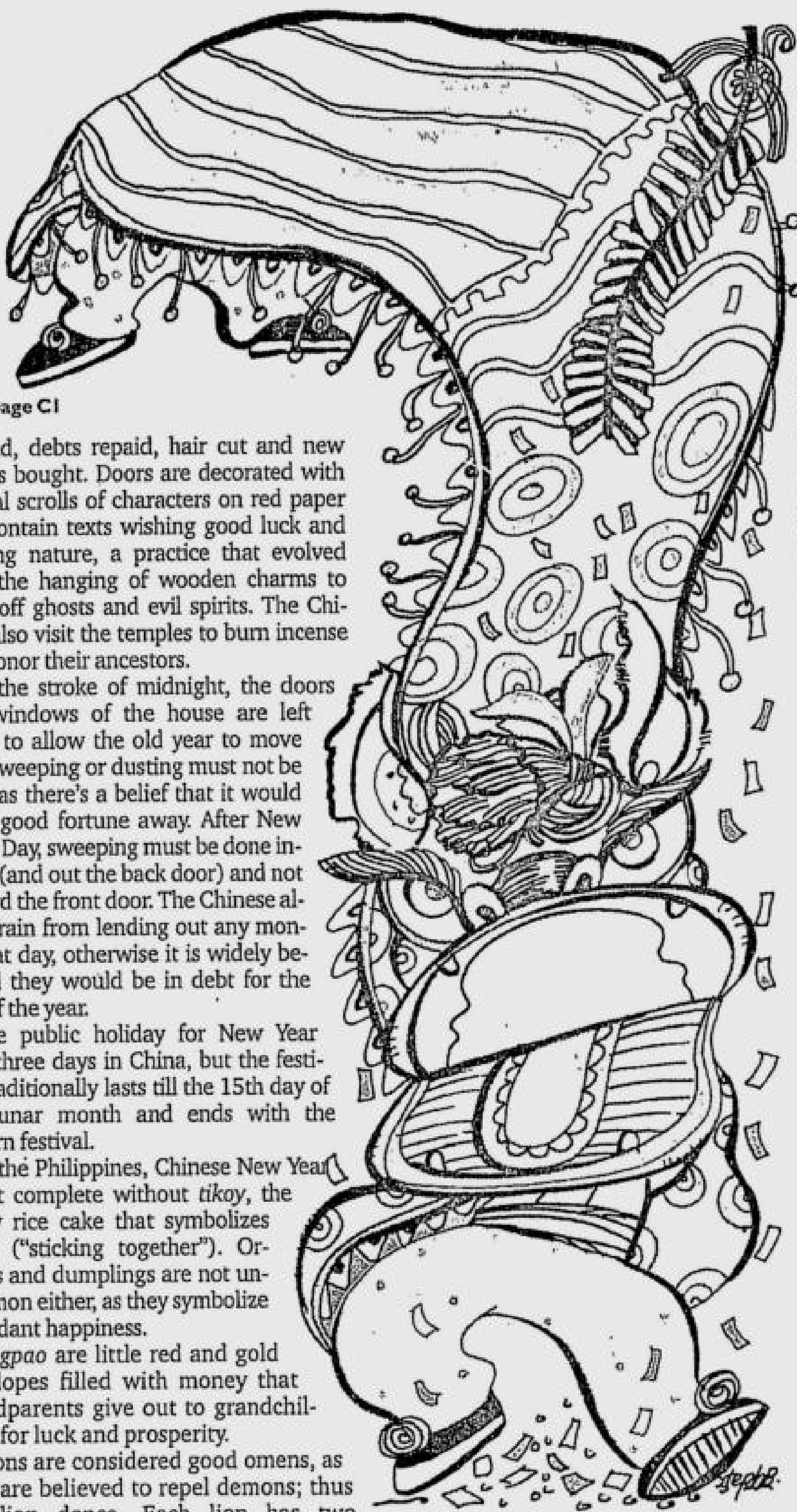

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

From page C1

cleaned, debts repaid, hair cut and new clothes bought. Doors are decorated with vertical scrolls of characters on red paper that contain texts wishing good luck and praising nature, a practice that evolved from the hanging of wooden charms to ward off ghosts and evil spirits. The Chinese also visit the temples to burn incense and honor their ancestors.

At the stroke of midnight, the doors and windows of the house are left open, to allow the old year to move out. Sweeping or dusting must not be done as there's a belief that it would drive good fortune away. After New Year's Day, sweeping must be done inward (and out the back door) and not toward the front door. The Chinese also refrain from lending out any money that day, otherwise it is widely believed they would be in debt for the rest of the year.

The public holiday for New Year lasts three days in China, but the festival traditionally lasts till the 15th day of the lunar month and ends with the lantern festival.

In the Philippines, Chinese New Year is not complete without *tikoy*, the sticky rice cake that symbolizes unity ("sticking together"). Oranges and dumplings are not uncommon either, as they symbolize abundant happiness.

Angpao are little red and gold envelopes filled with money that grandparents give out to grandchildren for luck and prosperity.

Lions are considered good omens, as they are believed to repel demons; thus the lion dance. Each lion has two dancers, one to maneuver the head, the other to move the back.

In Chinese mythology, the lion is considered a holy animal and a spirit. Lion dances are said to bring good luck. Firecrackers complement the dance to ward off evil spirits. Dragon dances differ from lion dances in terms of performance. The dragon puppet is made to move from the outside by walking in simultaneous patterns to make the dragon appear as if it is flying. Lion dances, on the other hand, are performed by a crew of two who move the large cloth or paper puppet from inside.

Ram's year

The most mild-mannered of all of the Chinese zodiac animals, the Ram can be prone to a little nervousness at times. It avoids confrontation whenever possible, and it prefers a quiet lifestyle. It is associated with the Chinese fifth direction—central. This centrality is indicative of the Ram's desire for peace and tranquility and for avoiding taking sides.

But the Ram has a sharp tongue that can often result in thoughtlessness. Therefore, it is a good idea to think before blurting anything out, but at the same time, it would be wise to try to see beyond the words people actually use, and to understand the motives behind what them to avoid confusion.

According to Feng Shui 2003 (http://www.chinesefortunecalendar.com/2003.htm): "The southeast area of the house is an unlucky area in 2003. Do not have any home improvement in this direction. The eastern area is not a lucky area, either. Do not let weak or sick family member live in the bedroom in this direction. The southern area is an auspicious area and gives people career and money luck in 2003. The northern area is good area for a study room."

Sources: http://www.chinesefortunecalendar.com/2003.htm, http://www.chinatown-online.org.uk/, http://www.webholidays.com/lunar/, http://www.lessons.ph/webmag/ish004/events.shtml, http://www.marimari.com/content/hong_kong/best_of/ lion_dragon/ main.html

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Celebrate Heart's Day with Boyz II Men

IMAGINE spending your Valentine's evening with your loved one being serenaded by the soulful voices of Boyz II Men. Imagine not having to shell out a single peso for this once-in-a-lifetime chance.

You don't have to settle for just imagining.

2BU! readers will get a chance to bring their dates to the most romantic concert in Manila this year. All you have to do is send in your favorite Boyz II Men song that best describes your love story and tell us why you chose that song.

Send your entries, along with a picture of you and your loved one, to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph or to 2bU! Contest, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Don't forget to include your name, age, school/office and contact information.

2bU! will choose one winner each week for four weeks. Each winner will receive two tickets to the Boyz II Men concert, which is presented by Jag Jeans and Close-Up.

Contest runs until Feb. 12.

This week's winner is Janet Rodriguez. Here's an excerpt from her entry.

"My honey and I met at a time when we were not exactly great fans of love. In fact, we were both cynical about true love. Some girl made him look like a fool while an ex made me think that all guys are scum. Falling in love was perhaps farthest from our minds. Boyz II Men's 'Fallin'' captures that exact emotion I felt when I met my honey—a mixture of wonder, helplessness and disbelief at what was happening."

Winners may claim their tickets from Pam or Jason at the PDI office on Mondays, 4 p.m. onward.

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Music, antics and broken English at the MTV Asia Awards 2003

Story on page D2

Linkin Park zooms higher with 'Meteora'

Story on page D3

THE AWARD GOES TO

Favorite Artist
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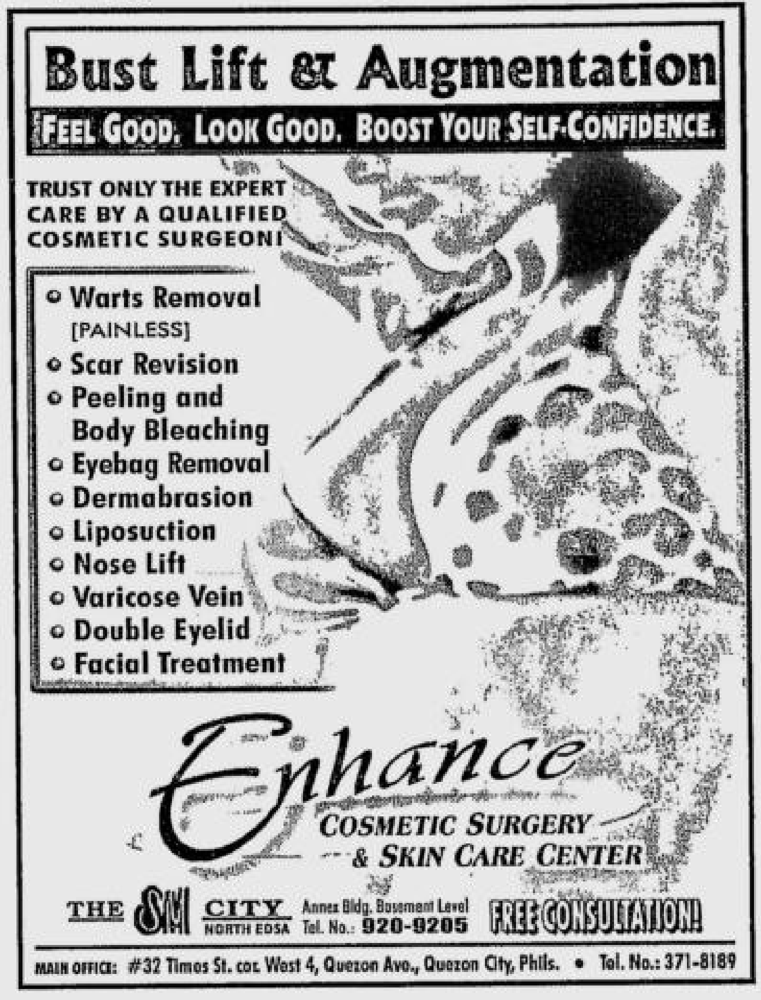
Singapore: **STEFANIE SUN**
Taiwan: **JAY CHOU**
China: **YU QUAN**
Hongkong: **SAMMI CHENG**
India: **A.R. RAHMAN**
Indonesia: **COKELAT**
Korea: **j.t.L.**
Malaysia: **SITI NURHALIZA**
Thailand: **D2B**
Favorite International Male Artist:
ROBBIE WILLIAMS
Favorite International Female Artist:
AVRIL LAVIGNE
Favorite Breakthrough Artist:
AVRIL LAVIGNE
Favorite Pop Act: **BLUE**
Favorite Rock Act: **LINKIN PARK**
Favorite Video:
POINTS OF AUTHORITY, LINKIN PARK
Asian Film Award: **DEVDAS**
Style Award: **AVRIL LAVIGNE**
Inspiration Award: **F4**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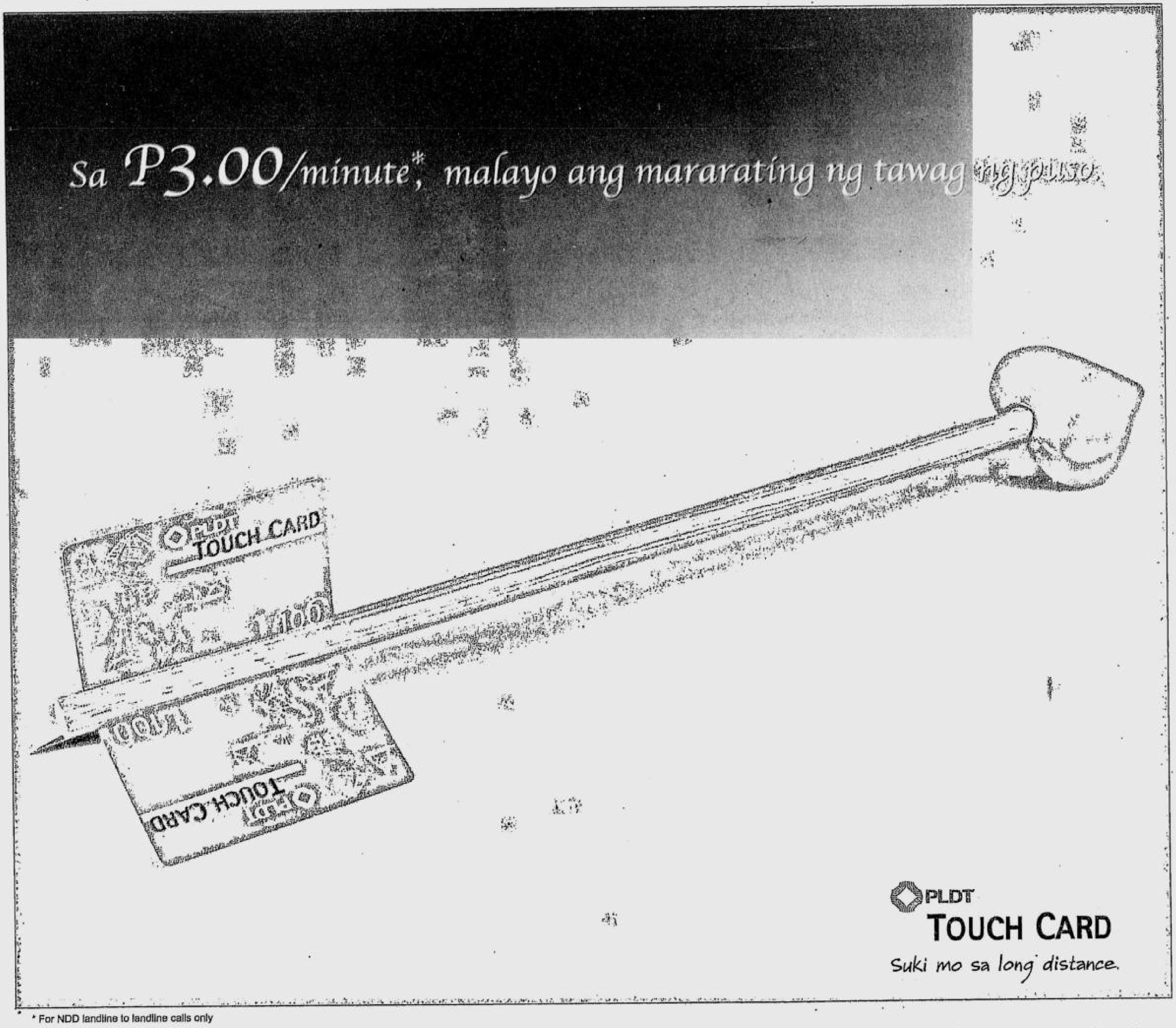
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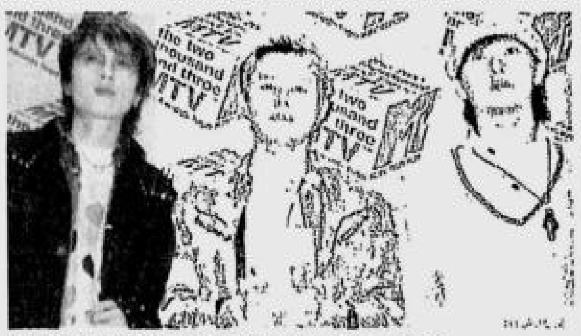

STREET URCHINS. Korean boyband j.t.L

SMOOTH as Suede

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

Music, antics and broken English at the MTV Asia Awards

Ogie Alcasid upstages 'pa-angst' Avril Lavigne, Parokya disarms press with self-deprecating humor, and KC, Belinda and Sarah barred from their own show

Tim Yap

SINGAPORE—"You won't be seeing this around my neck for quite a while," said Canadian teenage skateboard rocker Avril Lavigne as she took off her necktie, which had become her signature style. "You guys rock!" she told the astonished Asian audience at the MTV Asia Awards 2003 at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

Yup, this girl has to let go of her angst after walking away with three trophies—for favorite international female artist (besting J. Lo, Shakira, among others), favorite breakthrough artist (beating Norah Jones) and the style award. "The coolest thing is that my music's heard on this side of the world."

The commercial gap aired the Britney Spears ad for Toyota. Pop overload? A conspiracy theory? If I were you, I wouldn't give it much thought—just sit back, relax and enjoy the show that brought together the best Asian artists jamming with international superstars under the global youth culture brand that was MTV.

Not to mention artists trying their darnedest best to belt out songs, upstage each other, out-fashion one another and speak correct English. "And the winner goes to..." screamed a seductive singer who seemed to be on a caffeine overdose.

Regional awards

On its second year, the awards show opened in a grand way. The stage was covered in what seemed like a giant Adidas jacket ("They paid us that much," said an Indian executive from MTV Singapore). From there, Missy Elliot and her bevy of hip-hopping dancers grooved with giant puppets, reminiscent of Indonesian wayangs gyrating to Elliot's R&B beats.

Shag-a-delic host Shaggy came in casual duds while Coco Lee radiated in a red leather corset as she belted out some Canto-pop. During breaks, VJ Donita Rose and this annoying overweight and overaged VJ from MTV India kept the house shaking with some games with the audience. Donita started on a high note. "I'm from the Philippines. Are there any Filipinos out there?" And the crowd screamed.

After breaks, regional awards were given out, with the walking balloon logo of the MTV Asia Awards 2003 hopping from the Great Wall of China to a Malaysian train station and a Philippine farm.

Parokya ni Edgar got the audience giggling with their funny antics onstage. Buwi wore the Philippine flag on his chest, a smart move for Pinoy pride, if you ask me. Chito on the other hand, wore a Zonrox bleach shirt which exuded so much kitsch appeal.

Backstage, they charmed the press with their self-effacing humor, saying, "We are here again, and we lost again, and hopefully we'll be back again next year to lose."

Pinoy acts

Jay Chou, tagged as the Prince of Taiwanese R&B, performed an elaborate hip Oriental number fusing traditional Asian elements like karate and red flags with Canto-rap.

Ogie Alcasid, dapper in a Randy Ortiz ensemble, took away the limelight from angsty-looking Avril Lavigne with his cheery wit. When he presented an award together with Lavigne, he said, "Hi to my wife... honey press the recorder now," as if he were taping live for his show "SOP."

Backstage at the press room, MTV Philippines' ultra-charming Rod Nepomuceno introduced Ogie to the Asian press as a popular basketball player and actor in the country. Pinoy rock group Slapshock presented favorite rock act award to Linkin Park, whom many think are their foreign counterparts.

Regine Velasquez wore a beaded red Rajo Laurel gown that seemed more fit for the Oscars than for an MTV affair. Donita wore an Asian-inspired bib top. Some thought they both looked big (TV screen projects you up to 10 pounds heavier, you know) in their outfits. Nevertheless, they carried them with grace and pride.

Another big winner was rap-rock outfit Linkin Park, with two awards—favorite rock act and favorite video. "What are your plans from here on?" asked some press people. "World domination," they curtly replied.

Other celebrities that shone brightly that night were Robbie Williams, Anggun, Matchbox 20, Suede, Atomic Kitten, and our very own Kyla, who sang in the finale with boyband Blue and Ella of Malaysia.

Something funny happened to the MTV VJs on their way to the awards. VJs Belinda Panelo, KC Montero and Sarah Meier (who was with bf Borgy Manotoc that night, right before he flew back for the States) were not allowed to walk on the red carpet. Clad from head to foot in Dior and Gucci, they were stopped by security guards at the gates because they didn't have passes. What's that?

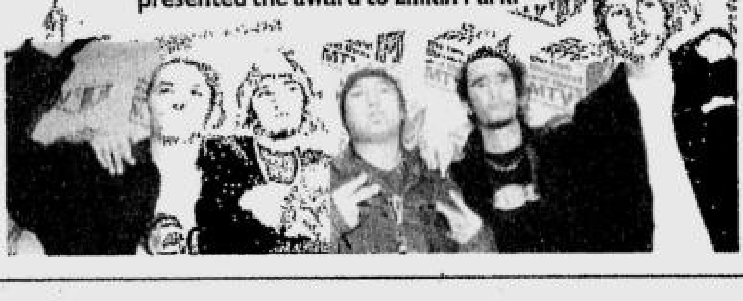
Despite the strict Singaporean security, the awards show went on smoothly, with some fans qeueing overnight just to get a glimpse of their favorite music stars.

FETISH FASHION. Anggun in corset couture

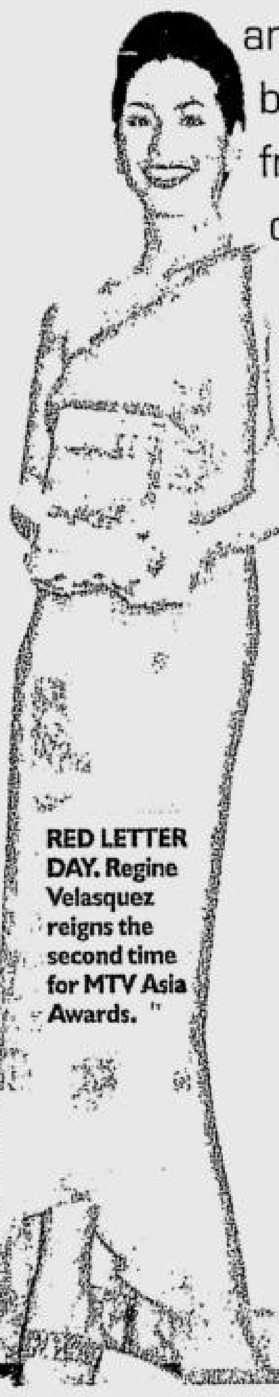
MATCH 20. Rob Thomas is A-class talent.

SECOND COMING. Stefanie Sun of Singapore wins for the second time around.

THE RING, PART FOUR. Avril Lavigne with Yaparazzi


FAVORITE ROCK ACT. Slapshock presented the award to Linkin Park.

KYLA has 24K talent.

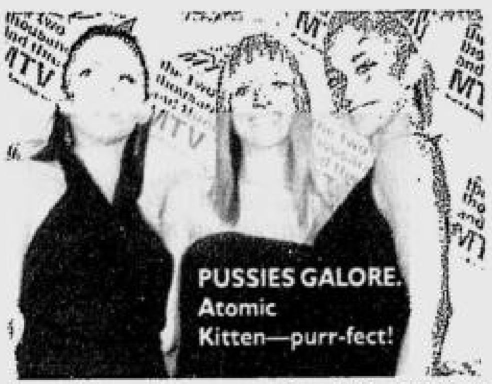

RED LETTER DAY. Regine Velasquez reigns the second time for MTV Asia Awards.

KRIS Dayanti goes crisscross.

SHINE ON. You'd need shades to look at Siti Nurhaliza of Malaysia.

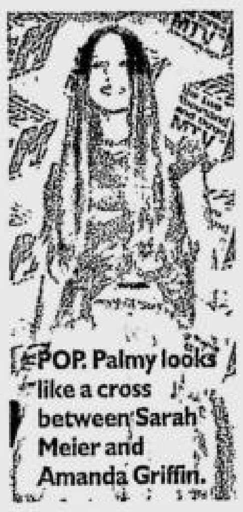
OA stands for Ogie Alcasid in Asia! Here wearing a Randy Ortiz ensemble

PRINCE OF THE ORIENT. Jay Chou of Taiwan


PUSSIES GALORE. Atomic Kitten—purr-fect!

BEDTIME STORIES. Belinda Panelo, Sarah Meier and Borgy Manotoc

MAI THAI. Peter Corp Dyrendal is Thai-Danish.


POP. Palmy looks like a cross between Sarah Meier and Amanda Griffin.

More than a lifestyle gadget

By Jason Doplito
2bU! Correspondent

"KISS your social life goodbye," says the Game Channel invite. Of course, assuming that one has a social life to speak of. Otherwise, if you're one of the many couch commandos, wielding power through the use of the TV remote control, then you may have to kiss that gadget goodbye instead, and have the mobile phone in its place.

Early this year, Wireless Services Asia (WSA), provider of cutting-edge Value Added Services for the mobile entertainment industry, has launched the first ever mobile TV gaming arcade in Asia. Hosted by Game Jock Iya, it's a TV show that allows users to interact with anyone around the country by joining in any of the featured five games, or by simply chatting with other users.

"From a mere communication gadget, the cell phone has become a lifestyle, entertainment and educational tool," said Ardie Balderrama, marketing director of WSA. With the onset of the GPRS technology that squeezed the Internet into our mobiles, the cell phone has indeed come a long way. And this time, it is set to conquer TV.

But compared to the different "chat channels" that have sprouted during the past year, the Game Channel also pits registered users against each other through the games offered by the one-hour show. This is broadcast live so interested players can tune in and join in the fun anytime during the program. Talk about mobile showdown on reality TV.

The games feature three-dimensional graphics which are fun and colorful. Definitely not anything like the "snake" game you've grown accustomed to in your mobile. In fact, they're not that far from how you see them in your games console in terms of visual appeal. Also, playing games on cell phones does not require a lot of thumb-thumping. Most of the instructions are easy to follow.

To be the ultimate couch commando, just text G REG plus your preferred user name to 2359.

Here is the lowdown on Game Channel's offerings.

Text Trivia

A personal favorite of the geek at heart, text trivia is one of the channel's three word games. A question is flashed onscreen and users have 20 seconds to select among the three choices that go with it. Bonus points are awarded to those who text their answers the fastest.

If you answer correctly, your user name will appear as bubbles, together with the corresponding points that you have accumulated in the contest.

This may seem a really slow game, especially because the time allotted for each trivia is a bit long. Plus the questions aren't that difficult. Even grade schoolers stand a chance of topping everyone in this category.

To play Trivia Text, send T (question number) (answer) to 2359.

The Katapult

If you want more challenge and action, go back to the time of the Flintstones and hurl rocks at dinosaurs with your catapult. In this game, you are divided into two teams. The objective is to wipe out your opponents before they hit you with rocks.

The screen shows an overview of the action, together with a screen compass and ruler, that will guide you in deciding what direction to take and the length of throw at your opponents.

To start playing, send K START 2359 and you will be assigned a caveman and dinosaur. If there are 30 players in the game, you will be put in the line-up until someone gets eliminated.

To smash other cavemen into bits, text K (angle of your throw) (length of throw) to 2359. You gain points every time you hit an opponent but minus points if you hit a teammate.

This game can raise your blood pressure since it requires a bit of physics and math. Now that's one way of having an adrenaline rush.

Cross Text

This crossword puzzle game is guaranteed to test your wits and vocabulary at the same time. You are given five minutes to finish the puzzle, unless you want others to beat you to the top spot. Like Text Trivia, time plays a crucial role here as the fastest texters are awarded as much as 100 points. Some questions are relatively easy, while others can be baffling (What do you call a bat dung?)

To play, send C (box number) (answer) to 2359. Your name will appear onscreen to confirm if the answer you sent is correct.

Search Text

Perhaps the easiest game, Search Text requires the fastest of fingertips and sense of sight. All you have to do is find the words that correspond to the category for the day (for example, Movies). You are given five minutes to find 15 words and again, bonus points await the ultimate texter.

Text S (the hidden word) to 2359 to join in the fun.

Bumper Games

If you view yourself as a rock-and-roll star, the closest you can get to being one is by smashing things around the house. The Bumper Game might suit your taste. With 24 cars allowed into the arena in any given time, this wrestling on wheels is a guaranteed mayhem.

Your objective, of course, is to crash into other cars until they blow up into pieces. There's no such thing as teammates; you are your own man here. As everyone wreaks havoc on your precious wheels, you can make a go for the pit stop, where repairs on your car are made.

Awarded points range from 25 to 100 depending on how much damage you create.

Send B Start to 2359 before crashing into opponents by entering B (six letters corresponding to your enemies) and send to 2359 as well.

The Game Channel airs every Tuesday and Thursday, 6-7 p.m. on IBC 13. This service is initially available for Globe subscribers only for P6 per text. Visit www.gamechannel.tv

'Ring' fever

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

EVER since the Japanese movie "Ring" started showing in theaters, audiences have developed a phobia of television, videotape and women with long unruly hair.

With an extended theater run and an American remake, the success of "Ring" is quite remarkable, especially for a film that obviously was made on a shoestring budget, has English subtitles and with characters who do not exactly scream much. In fact, this is one of the few horror movies in which the audience scream louder.

Perhaps the reason "Ring" has become such a hit worldwide lies in the relative newness of Japanese culture. Unlike stereotypical American movies, Japanese films and Japanese culture seem somber and unfamiliar. The romance and drama attached to Japan draw us to the movie. Hence, a story whose premise is a cursed videotape whose every watcher gets a ring on the phone to be informed he has just one week to live is not difficult to swallow.

But the success of "Ring" is more than that. The sound effects and music score contributed to the movie's horror. They may be primitive when compared to Hollywood effects, but their suggestiveness and the director's skill in utilizing them conjure just the right amount of horror in the audience's imagination.

The "Ring" places its audience in a mental labyrinth. It lures their interest by skillful unraveling. It presents them with a mystery. It is a movie that not only horrifies, but also makes people think.

Part of the movie series' success is the audience's fascination with the enigmatic Japanese culture

Ring

Directed by Nakata Hideo
1998

The phenomenal series begins with the first installment. Based on the book by Shizuko Koji, "Ring" (or "Ringu" in Japanese) opens with an urban legend about an accursed video, viewers of which were supposed to have inexplicably died a week later.

Asakawa Reiko (Matsushima Nanako), a journalist and a single mom, decides to investigate the story following her niece Tomoko's death right after watching the video. Her sleuthing takes her to Izu, the origin of the curse where she stumbles upon the video. It shows a collage of images: a woman brushing her hair before a mirror, blurred Japanese characters with only the words "local" and "volcanic eruption" recognizable, people crawling on all fours, a man with his face covered, an eye and a well. Immediately after watching it, she gets the strange phone call saying she has only one week to live. She seeks the help of her ex-husband, Takayama Ryuji (Sanada Hiroyuki), and together they hurriedly try to solve the mystery and beat the one-week deadline.

The enigma of the videotape revolves around a mysterious early 20th century psychic named Yamamura Shizuko and her even more mysterious daughter Sadako ("chaste child").

No scene is wasted as the couple analyzes the images and solves the mystery. The fact that Reiko and Ryuji are estranged adds humanity to the characters.

Director Nakata Hideo succeeded in building up the tension of the movie by using interesting camera angles and suspenseful sound effects, revealing the key to the mystery only at the very end, thus leaving the audience at the edge of their seats. It is arguably the best among the "Ring" movies.

Ring 2

Directed by Nakata Hideo
1998

The sequel begins where the first movie left off. Takano Mai (Nakatani Miki), Takayama Rjuyi's assistant, finds that she has been endowed psychic powers after discovering Ryuji's corpse in his apartment. She decides to investigate his death and realizes that everyone who finds a person killed by the video's curse attains powers like those of Sadako's. She meets with Reiko and her son Yoichi, who have gone into hiding to escape the curse's effects. As the movie progresses, so does the never-ending story of Yamamura Sadako.

Although this movie does have its own share of hair-raising scenes, it is definitely not as good as the original. However, it does succeed in further unraveling the mystery of Sadako and in suggesting how the video curse works. What is commendable is how the movie reveals more about Sadako but still keeps a certain level of ambiguity, giving the audience answers but leaving them with more questions.

Ring 0: Birthday

Directed by Tsuruta Norio
2000

A worthy prequel, "Ring 0" transports us to the 1960s, the time of Yamamura Sadako's lonely adolescence. Beautiful and intelligent, Sadako (Nakama Yukie) is in therapy, recuperating from her haunting childhood. She tries to recover by joining a drama troupe as an apprentice. Soon, everyone in the group has strange dreams about the new girl. As everyone becomes suspicious, deaths begin to occur in the manner audiences are now familiar with.

The story line becomes interesting with the introduction of a romantic premise. Toyama (Tanabe Seiichi), the sound manager of the theater group, becomes enamored with the beautiful quiet girl. As their relationship deepens, so does the evil that has traumatized Sadako since childhood. It is strange to feel sympathy for a protagonist who will later turn out to be a villain, but we realize that Sadako is plagued with more evil than we imagined.

Whatever went wrong with "Ring 2" is not repeated in this horror drama. Nakama Yukie is perfect for the character of the tragic Sadako. Equipped with the same classic horror ingredients that made the first "Ring" so successful, "Ring 0" is a prequel that does justice to the original.

Ring facts

Why the title "Ring"? Suzuki Koji never intended to use it in the circular sense. He says, "I had a strong feeling that it would fit. 'Ring' is usually used as a noun, but there's also a verb usage of ring, meaning 'to call someone,' or 'to call out,' such as an alarm clock or phone ringing. But since I gave it that title, a lot of circular things have turned up in the story."

Other Ring movies include "Rasen," "Ring Virus" and "The Ring" (Hollywood version) as well as a TV series.

In Taiwan, the title of the movie is "Ghost Story of Seven Nights." It can also be found under the title "Seven Nights' Strange Talk," a literal translation of the Chinese characters. In Spain, the movie is "El Circulo," and in China, it is something like "Deadly Ring of Night."

The flashback scene of Shizuko's public demonstration of her powers is based on true events. A certain Mifune Chizuko lived during the late 1800s in Kumamoto Prefecture. By the early 20th century, her supposed powers of precognition had spread, finally becoming known to Prof. Fukarai Tomokichi of Tokyo University. Having a deep interest in the supernatural, he used her as a test subject in proving the existence of ESP. His tests culminated in a similar public demonstration in 1910. Although no one died during that event, Chizuko was accused of being a fake and never recovered from the incident. At 25 years old, she ended her life by taking poison.

One year before Mifune Chizuko's death, another girl was born that would later be famous for her gift of nensha, a power that allowed her to focus her will to produce an image on film or any medium. Her name was Takahashi Sadako.

Source: http://ringworld.somrux.com

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Linkin Park zooms higher with 'Meteora'

From page D6

what's best for everybody involved and that takes a lot of patience. It actually brought us closer, I think we're a lot closer now. I don't think we fight anymore. It's kinda creepy."

Part of the fame is being compared to other bands like Limp Bizkit. Joe said, "For people that don't know, who hear us for the first time and don't hear all the parts, because the sound is heavy and there's rapping, the casual listener would think we're the same... but it's fine. They're a great band too. It would be different if we were compared to Atomic Kitten."

Do you feel like a rock star? Joe answered without missing a beat, "No, I'm just a kid from L.A."

Chester said that the best thing about being part of Linkin Park is "traveling all over the world... being able to come to Singapore and hang out and do these interviews and meet all the fans."

The two are just as passionate about their fans as they are about their music.

Joe said, "(Fans) are very important. We have a lot of rock kids, hip-hop fans. If you go to our shows, you'd see bikers, like Harley Davidson bikers next to a punk kid next to a break-dancer. Our fans are really cool. We haven't had any weird experiences. We respect them and they respect us at the same time. We're very lucky."

Chester agreed., "The fans to us are the most important aspect."

And when asked about their most memorable experience with a fan, Chester replied, "It's kind of hard to say. The fans are the reason why we're here. They propel us in this place where we're at. They've given us the opportunity to create music and do this for a living. Every fan who's gone to a concert or bought a Linkin Park t-shirt or a record, they all have contributed in one way or another to allow us to do this with our lives and that's the biggest blessing of all. This is something we've always dreamed of doing our entire lives. We get to do it because of the fans. It's their dedication that makes you want to do the best you can for the people who want to hear you. That's really what motivates us and pushes us to continue writing the music that we write."

The two echoed the same sentiments a few hours after the interview, when Linkin Park won two awards from the MTV Asia Awards—Favorite Rock Act and the night's most coveted title, Favorite Video. Chester's voice was heard above the fans' almost deafening screams. "You're the reason why we do this."

And that's the reason why they buy Linkin Park records.

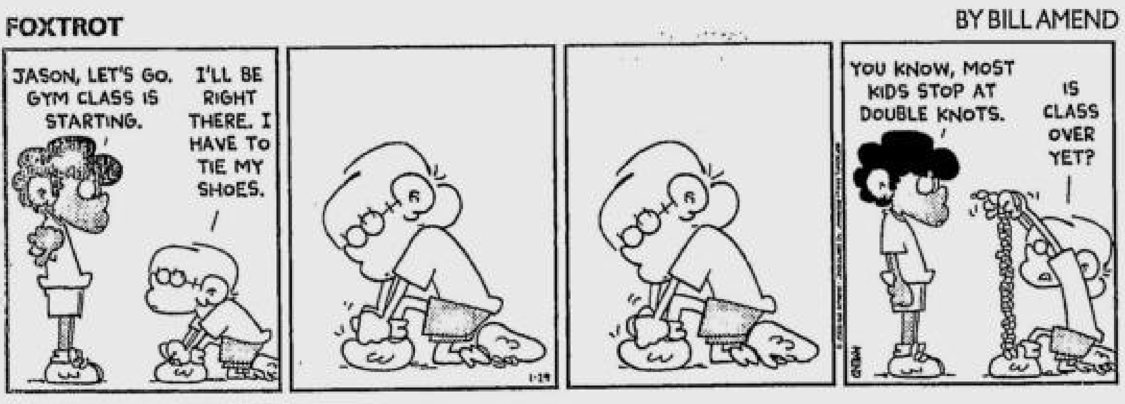
E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Watch out for Linkin Park's Asian tour this year.

More exclusive interviews in the coming weeks.

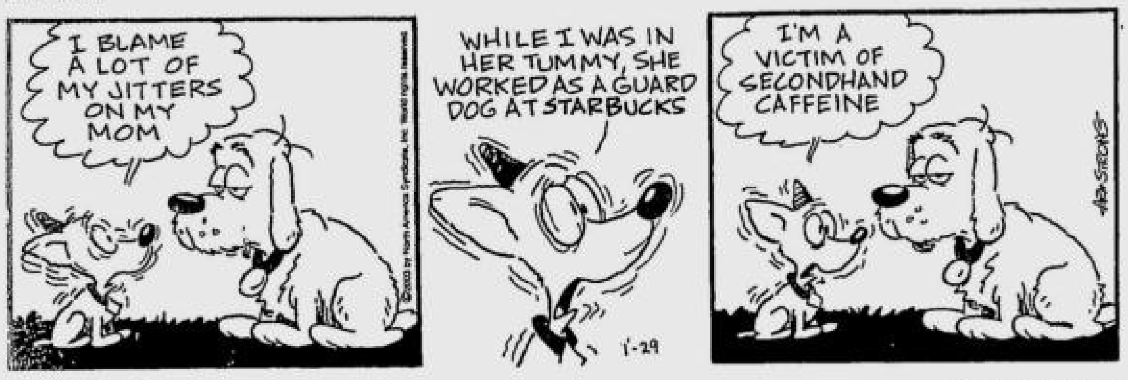
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


JASON, LET'S GO. GYM CLASS IS STARTING.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE. I HAVE TO TIE MY SHOES.
YOU KNOW, MOST KIDS STOP AT DOUBLE KNOTS.
IS CLASS OVER YET?

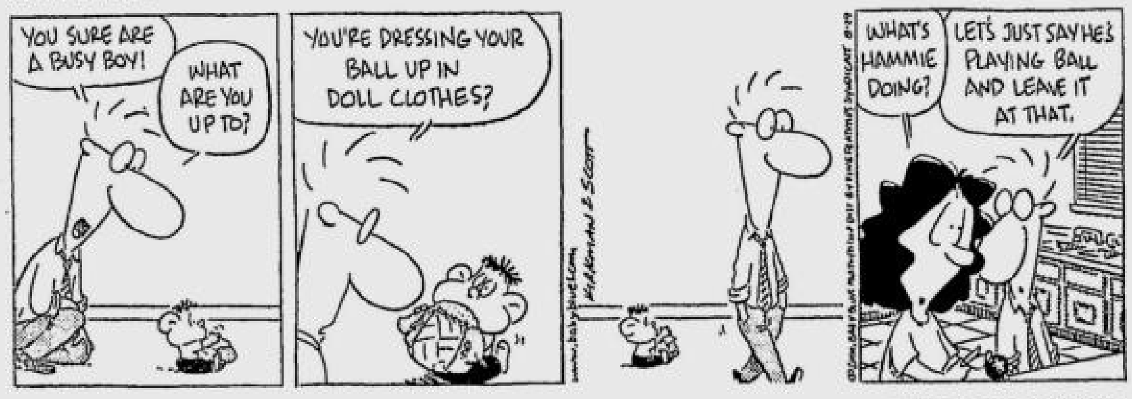
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I BLAME A LOT OF MY JITTERS ON MY MOM
WHILE I WAS IN HER TUMMY, SHE WORKED AS A GUARD DOG AT STARBUCKS
I'M A VICTIM OF SECONDHAND CAFFEINE

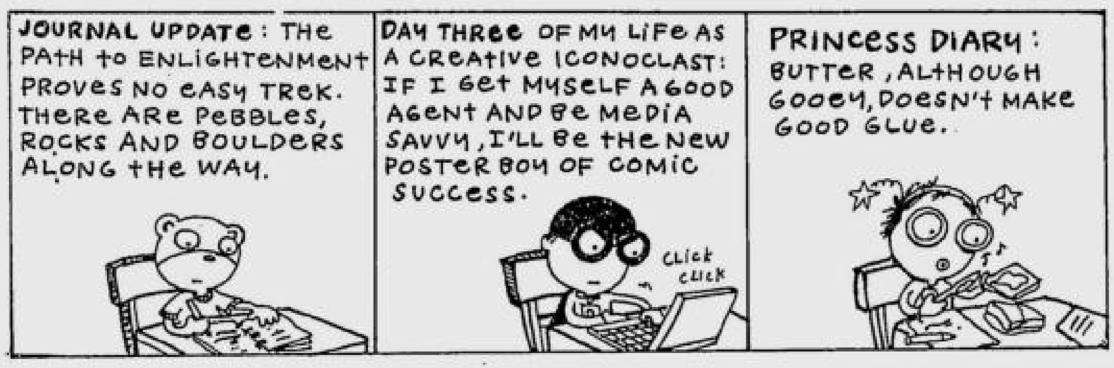
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YOU SURE ARE A BUSY BOY!
WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
YOU'RE DRESSING YOUR BALL UP IN DOLL CLOTHES?
WHAT'S HAMMIE DOING?
LET'S JUST SAY HE'S PLAYING BALL AND LEAVE IT AT THAT.

TOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


JOURNAL UPDATE: THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT PROVES NO EASY TREK. THERE ARE PEBBLES, ROCKS AND BOULDERS ALONG THE WAY.
DAY THREE OF MY LIFE AS A CREATIVE ICONOCLAST: IF I GET MYSELF A GOOD AGENT AND BE MEDIA SAVVY, I'LL BE THE NEW POSTER BOY OF COMIC SUCCESS.
CLICK CLICK
PRINCESS DIARY: BUTTER, ALTHOUGH GOOEY, DOESN'T MAKE GOOD GLUE.

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tom Selleck, Ann Jillian, Oprah Winfrey, Sara Gilbert

Happy Birthday: Protect your interests and your reputation this year and you will reach whatever goals you set for yourself. Be careful not to take on someone else's responsibilities. Self-confidence and the ability to say no when necessary will be the key to getting ahead. Your numbers are 9, 12, 22, 25, 36, 44

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Family discussions will prove to be exhausting. Think before you act. Give yourself a break away from everyone else to regroup.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your ability to make extra cash is evident. Lending or borrowing will be beneficial. You can take a bit of a risk if you do your research properly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Relationships will be erratic today. Be sure to think twice before you say something that might hurt your partner's ego. Re-evaluate your personal intentions and motives.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let your personal obligations interfere with your work responsibilities. An unstable home environment may cause you to miss small but important details. Stay focused on the task at hand.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Make the physical and mental alterations that will raise your self-esteem and put you back on top of things. You'll do better if you feel confident to explore new areas.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Spend some quality time with children or friends. They have been neglected because your career has been all-consuming. Everything should run smoothly without you for a little while.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Travel or educational pursuits will bring added knowledge. Secret affairs will be prevalent. Make sure the person is not already involved with someone else.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Talk to a friend who knows about marketing. You can turn your innovative ideas into money-making opportunities. This is an ideal time to launch those dreams.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't let others put unrealistic demands on you. Be cautious when dealing with other people's possessions or personal papers. Get some rest so you are alert.

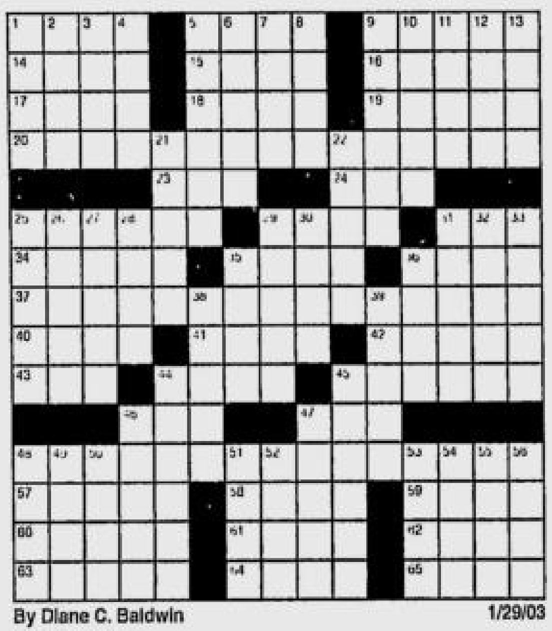
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Confusion regarding your personal life will lead to change. Talk to someone you trust who is impartial. Be sure that you are doing the right thing before you implement your ideas.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Romantic opportunities will evolve through work-related activities. Secret affairs are not to your benefit. Be careful who you trust with private information.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't be too eager to give others financial help. Avoid being railroaded into donating money to organizations that you don't truly believe in.

Birthday Baby: You will be determined, clever and quite willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead. You will be curious about many different aspects of life and will always strive to be the best.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

1/29/03

ACROSS

1 Fixed charges
5 Moose baby
9 Throw a wet blanket on
14 Bit of a frolic
15 Cosmetics ingredient
16 Marked Spanish accent?
17 Driving force
18 Congeal
19 Edible bulb
20 Is wishy-washy
23 Do-over serve
24 That's nasty!
25 Schematic
29 Out of kilter
31 __ the question
34 Quickly wed
35 Singer Redding
36 Nebraska neighbor
37 Gets off the fence
40 Seer's sign
41 Lecture
42 Beamed, surgically
43 Go-ahead sign
44 Cow's mate
45 Laughing matter
46 Miss the mark
47 Web address point
48 Is adamant
57 Speak from a soapbox
58 Daily Planet reporter
59 Commercial award
60 Crayon in
61 Banister
62 Corridor
63 Chips with stone
64 Fighting force
65 Aware of

DOWN

1 Goof up
2 Jimmy Carter's middle name
3 Thus
4 Give a bias to
5 Seal of approval
6 Divvy out
7 Plunder
8 Greek cheese
9 Really old-fashioned
10 Tiny amount
11 Hodgepodge
12 Worshiped one
13 Advance
21 Swings about
22 Care for.
25 Clunker of a car
26 Shrine to remember
27 Hitched, as oxen
28 Exposed
29 Coral construction
30 Blink of an eye
31 Composure
32 Held title to
33 Rice field
35 October birthstone
36 Muslim leader
38 Driving maneuver
39 Indolence
44 Richard of Branagh's "Hamlet"
45 Dear
46 Halt, legally
47 Sturdy fabric
48 Landing place
49 Age after Bronze
50 Black-tie affair
51 Gumbo ingredient
52 Close
53 Reverberate
54 Panache
55 Lively melody
56 Flight-school final

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	A	B	■	A	B	U	T	■	A	P	A	R	T
T	E	T	E	■	L	E	N	I	■	W	A	H	O	O
E	A	R	L	■	E	R	I	E	■	O	N	S	E	T
W	R	I	G	L	E	Y	F	I	E	L	D	■	■	■
S	N	A	R	E	■	L	Y	N	X	■	A	L	I	A
■	■	■	A	N	T	■	■	■	C	A	S	I	N	G
A	R	I	D	■	R	E	C	O	I	L	■	C	P	A
V	E	T	E	R	A	N	S	S	T	A	D	I	U	M
O	L	A	■	U	N	E	A	S	E	■	E	T	T	A
W	E	L	L	E	S	■	■	■	D	O	C	■	■	■
S	T	Y	E	■	O	N	U	S	■	R	I	N	G	O
■	■	■	C	O	M	I	S	K	E	Y	P	A	R	K
S	I	X	T	H	■	C	H	I	P	■	H	O	U	R
I	D	I	O	M	■	H	E	R	E	■	E	M	M	A
L	A	I	R	S	■	E	R	T	E	■	R	I	P	S

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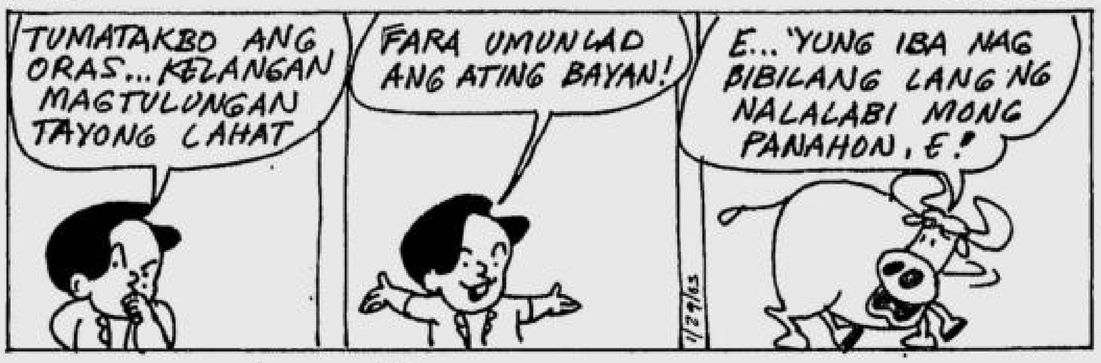
1/29/03

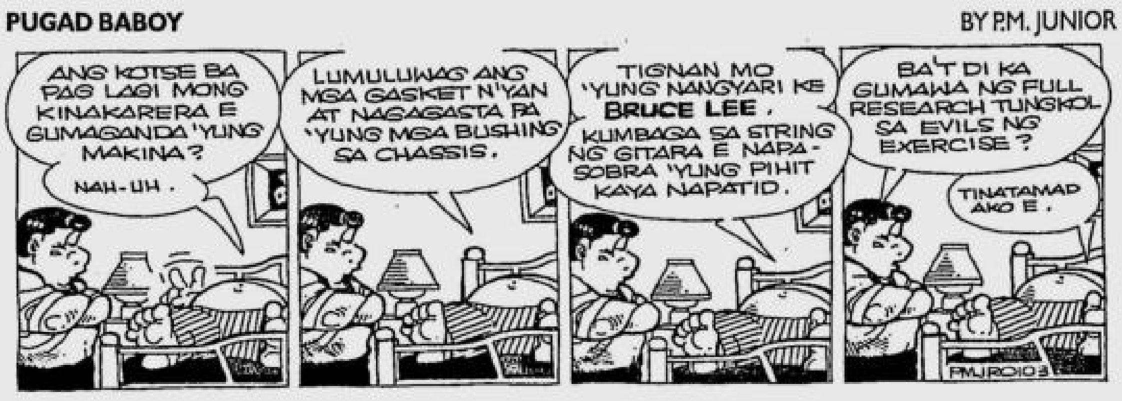
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TUMATAKBO ANG ORAS... KELANGAN MAGTULUNGAN TAYONG LAHAT
PARA UMUNLAD ANG ATING BAYAN!
E... 'YUNG IBA NAG BIBILANG LANG NG NALALABI MONG PANAHON, E!
1/29/03

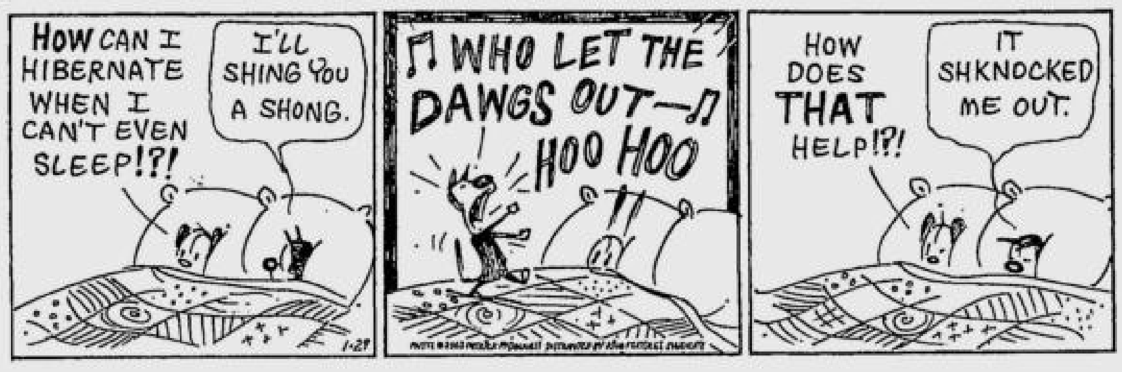
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG KOTSE BA PAG LAGI MONG KINAKARERA E GUMAGANDA 'YUNG MAKINA?
NAH-UH.
LUMULUWAG ANG MGA GASKET N'YAN AT NAGAGASTA PA 'YUNG MGA BUSHING SA CHASSIS.
TIGNAN MO 'YUNG NANGYARI KE BRUCE LEE. KUMBAGA SA STRING NG GITARA E NAPA-SOBRA 'YUNG PIHIT KAYA NAPATID.
BA'T DI KA GUMAWA NG FULL RESEARCH TUNGKOL SA EVILS NG EXERCISE?
TINATAMAD AKO E.
PMJR0103

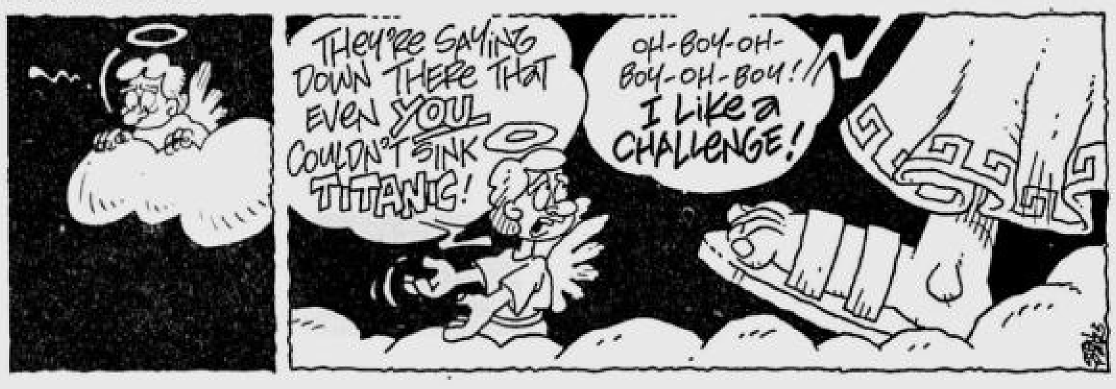
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HOW CAN I HIBERNATE WHEN I CAN'T EVEN SLEEP!?!
I'LL SHING YOU A SHONG.
♫ WHO LET THE DAWGS OUT—♫ HOO HOO
HOW DOES THAT HELP!?!
IT SHKNOCKED ME OUT.

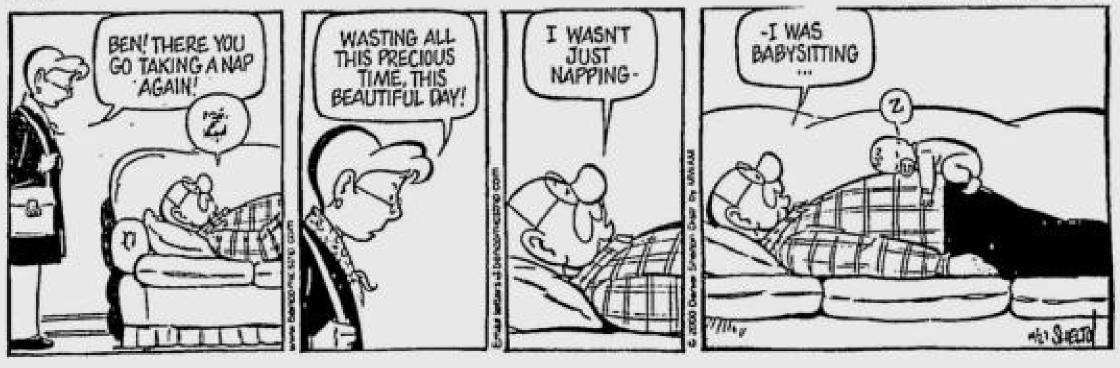
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THEY'RE SAYING DOWN THERE THAT EVEN YOU COULDN'T SINK TITANIC!
OH-BOY-OH-BOY-OH-BOY! I LIKE A CHALLENGE!

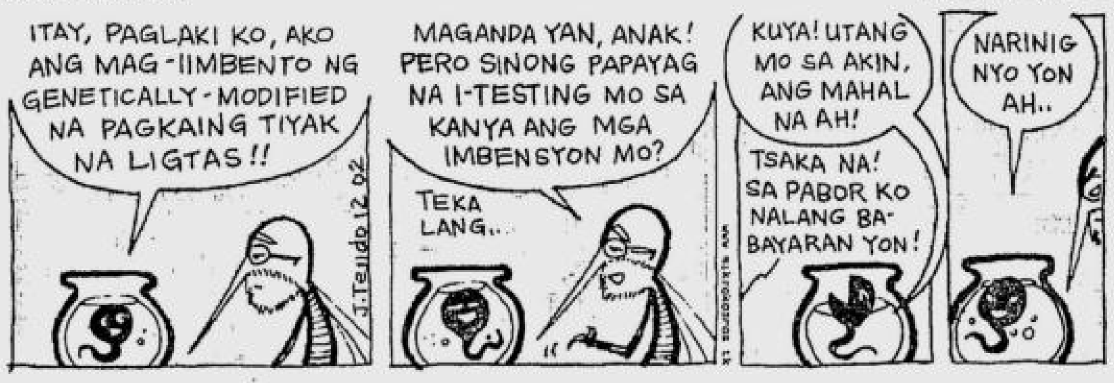
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BEN! THERE YOU GO TAKING A NAP AGAIN!
Z
WASTING ALL THIS PRECIOUS TIME, THIS BEAUTIFUL DAY!
I WASN'T JUST NAPPING-
-I WAS BABYSITTING ...
Z

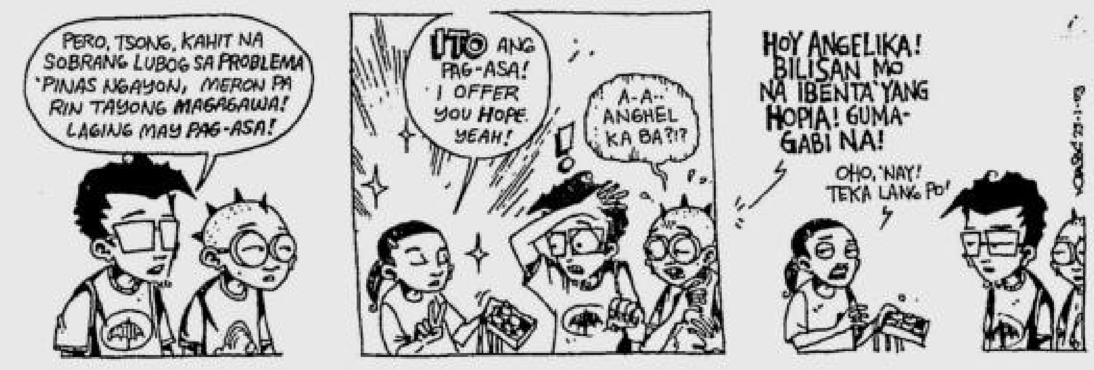
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ITAY, PAGLAKI KO, AKO ANG MAG-IIMBENTO NG GENETICALLY-MODIFIED NA PAGKAING TIYAK NA LIGTAS!!
J.Tejido 12.02
MAGANDA YAN, ANAK! PERO SINONG PAPAYAG NA I-TESTING MO SA KANYA ANG MGA IMBENSYON MO?
TEKA LANG..
KUYA! UTANG MO SA AKIN, ANG MAHAL NA AH!
TSAKA NA! SA PABOR KO NALANG BA-BAYARAN YON!
NARINIG NYO YON AH..

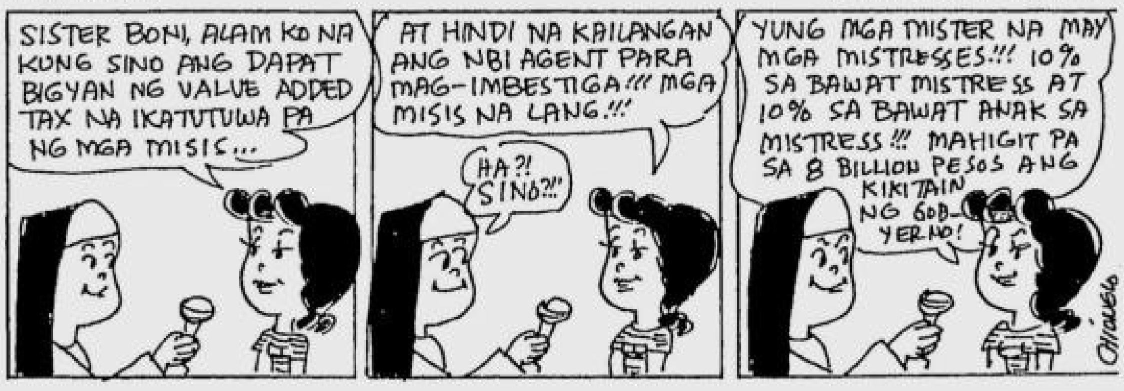
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


PERO, TSONG, KAHIT NA SOBRANG LUBOG SA PROBLEMA 'PINAS NGAYON, MERON PA RIN TAYONG MAGAGAWA! LAGING MAY PAG-ASA!
ITO ANG PAG-ASA! I OFFER YOU HOPE. YEAH!
A-A-.. ANGHEL KA BA?!?
HOY ANGELIKA! BILISAN MO NA IBENTA 'YANG HOPIA! GUMA-GABI NA!
OHO, 'NAY! TEKA LANG PO!

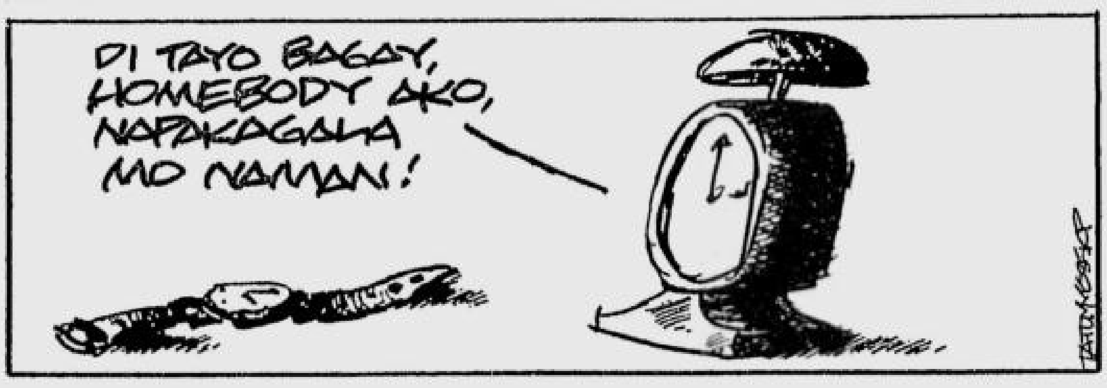
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BONI, ALAM KO NA KUNG SINO ANG DAPAT BIGYAN NG VALUE ADDED TAX NA IKATUTUWA PA NG MGA MISIS...
AT HINDI NA KAILANGAN ANG NBI AGENT PARA MAG-IMBESTIGA!!! MGA MISIS NA LANG.!!
HA?! SINO?!!
YUNG MGA MISTER NA MAY MGA MISTRESSES!!! 10% SA BAWAT MISTRESS AT 10% SA BAWAT ANAK SA MISTRESS!!! MAHIGIT PA SA 8 BILLION PESOS ANG KIKITAIN NG GOB-YERNO!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI TAYO BAGAY, HOMEBODY AKO, NAPAKAGALA MO NAMAN!

Streetdancing goes mainstream

By Zee Castro
2bU! Correspondent

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Diliman is one of the few schools (if not the only one) that offer Streetdance as a course. Every semester, it is the most in-demand class with hundreds of students lining up for the coveted (and limited!) slots in the Physical Education class.

A contemporary dance form performed to a syncopated tune, Streetdance was popularized in the Philippines in the early '90s by Jungee Marcelo, the artist, choreographer, producer, director and songwriter behind such hits as Gary Valenciano's "Hataw Na."

In 1997, the UP Streetdance Club was formed by members of the basic and advanced classes of Jerome Dimalanta, who trained under Marcelo. Sir Jerome, as he is known to his students, has become the group's driving force, as well as director and choreographer.

The club currently has more than 50 members from different colleges of the university. "It's open to everyone, even to the faculty and alumni," says club president JM de Jesus. Students who have already graduated return to train and perform in concerts.

The club's core group consists of 13 talented dancers called "The Crew," which is often invited to perform in and outside the UP. It has won in several dance competitions, taking the first prize, for instance, in Dancelebration (Streetdance Category), Levi's Engineered Groove HipHop Competition, G4 Ayala Open Dance Competition, and Danztek@2001. The UP Streetdance Club also won in the National Selections conducted by the Philippine Professional Dance Sport Association.

UP STREETDANCE—Philippine representatives to the World Dance Championships.

JUST a few of its talented dancers.

Off to Germany

Later this year, the group will represent the Philippines in the hiphop category of the World Dance Championships in Germany.

For some members of the group, the experience has nurtured dreams of becoming professional dancers, while others simply see it as a source of extra income. Even before they leave schools, some of the students are already coaching dance troupes and pep squads of schools like Miriam, Poveda, Holy Spirit and St. Mary's College. Others conduct streetdance workshops at ABS-CBN and Danza studio.

De Jesus says club members have one common goal, "That is, to improve our craft."

Dancing is not the only tie that binds the group. An hour before training, the club holds a Dance Ministry during which they have group interactions and Bible sharing. "We'd like to think that the secret to our winning is that we offer everything to Him. The audience, supporters are just an added bonus," De Jesus says.

On Mar. 15, the UP Streetdance Club will strut its stuff at their third concert, Street Fusion 3: 3 X the Funk, which will be held at the UP Theater. Collaborating in the project is the Papuri Music Ministry.

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2bU!

THE GUYS chill out at the Grand Copthorne Hotel in Singapore

Linkin Park zooms higher with 'Meteora'

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

"IF YOU were to buy one CD, which would it be?" Donita asked a teenage boy who had been pulled up from the mosh pit of the MTV Asia Awards.

"Linkin Park's 'Reanimation'!" the boy screamed emphatically, even turning towards the area where Linkin Park's vocalist Chester Bennington and DJ Joe Hahn were seated.

You can bet that soon this boy will be queuing up with countless other fans to buy "Meteora," Linkin Park's newest album, set to come out in March.

Chester and Joe took 2bU! through the album's creative process, in an interview where they talked about their new songs, life on the road and their passion for music. That day, the other members of the band, vocalist Mike Shinoda, guitarist Brad Delson, drummer Rob Bourdon and bassist Phoenix, were in California, programming songs.

"It took us about 18 months in about four different phases to write 'Meteora,'" Chester said. "In 2001, we decided it was probably a good time to kind of redirect our mindset from the touring kind of mindset to trying to get ourselves geared up to write. We put up a studio in the back of a bus, ripped out a back lounge and constructed a floor and tie-downs and designed our own case for our Pro Tools. We just wanted to get things out, to get the creative juices flowing. And we got really good ideas out of it."

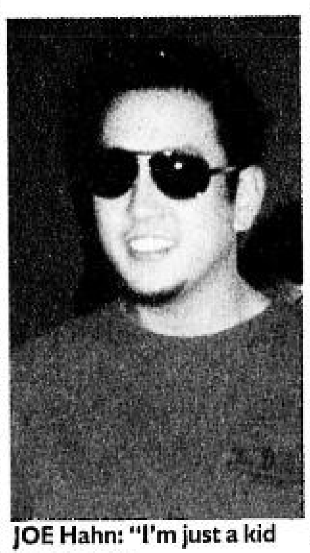
From the studio, they moved on to vocalist Mike Shinoda's house, where they started recording songs. "We started recording in Mike's house," Chester recalled. "We took all those ideas and kinda messed around with them and by the time we put everything together, we had about 80 songs. And that's when we really started the process of fine-tuning the parts and finding the ones that really stuck out. We took out all those ideas and we narrowed it down to about 30 or 40 songs."

After working on pre-production with Don Gilmore, who also produced "Hybrid Theory," they started recording in the studio. "Final week of recording, I got sick. So I had to finish recording while we were starting mixing, which is a very kind of strange and almost dangerous thing. It actually kinda worked out. We actually finished the chorus for our first single, 'Somewhere I Belong' in New York while we were mixing."

The result of their hard work is "Meteora," a 12-track album of undeniably Linkin Park songs. Select members of the media from the Asia-Pacific region were invited to enjoy the complete album in a private listening session the day before the interview. The new sound is more confident, stronger and at times heavier, but remains very Linkin Park.

Philosophy

Chester said, "Our philosophy has always been what is best for the song, not what's best for each individual person. We're kind of perfectionists and we just wanna do what's right for the song. We recorded 15 tracks total and there's 12 on the record. We were trying to figure out which ones would work together. An album is a package. It's a collection of songs that should have a common tie and there were a few songs that kinda stuck out. It wasn't that they were bad in any way. I'm sure any band would love to have those songs on a record, they're really good songs, but they stuck out like a (sore) thumb. We kind of make sure that we really have a full package that you would want to listen to from beginning to end, without wanting to skip over anything."



JOE Hahn: "I'm just a kid from L.A."

If there's one thing fans would immediately notice about the CD, it would be the lack of space between the songs. "In this record, we kinda incorporated going from one track into the next with no space between the tracks. They just kinda flow one into another. They kinda just tell you where they wanna go. It's a puzzle. All the pieces in the pile still create the same puzzle but you can't just put them in any order."

One would also observe the faster beats in some of the songs. "Rob stepped it up in this one and forced the rest of the band to kinda follow his lead," Chester said. "He's a really dedicated drummer. When we start practicing and rehearsing, he's the captain because he's tighter than everybody else. He locks himself up and rehearses for eight to ten hours a day every day. He'll sit there for hours and hours. He's really a perfectionist."

LINKIN PARK
REANIMATION

Warner Music Philippines brought 2bU! to Singapore for an exclusive interview with Joe Hahn and Chester Bennington of the world's hottest rock-rap group

The first single is "Somewhere I Belong," which, according to Joe, "is about trying to find your place in the world, escaping from whatever problems there is."

But according to Chester, their favorite record is "Breaking the Habit." "It's a different song, it's a different approach for us. It doesn't have huge guitars, it doesn't have screaming. It's really emotional and it's got really soft guitar parts, it's got a 10-piece orchestra on it. I think it shows our diversity. We journeyed out into the left field on that one. But it still sounds like Linkin Park."

Both guys spoke about the "second album syndrome," the pressures most artists with successful debut albums have to face when trying to come up with an album that is as good—or even better than the first.

Chester said, "Pressure comes with territory. But at the same time, we put all the pressure on ourselves. With 'Hybrid Theory,' when we turned it in it wasn't like, 'Okay, great, we've got an album that's gonna sell ten million records.' Nobody knew that. We just really tried to write music that we enjoyed, that we hadn't heard before. We finished it and said, if this wasn't our record, we'd go buy it in the record stores. We feel that way about 'Meteora' too. It's kind of an extension of where we were in 'Hybrid Theory.'"

Joe joined in: "The only pressure that's there is our pressure on ourselves and each other."

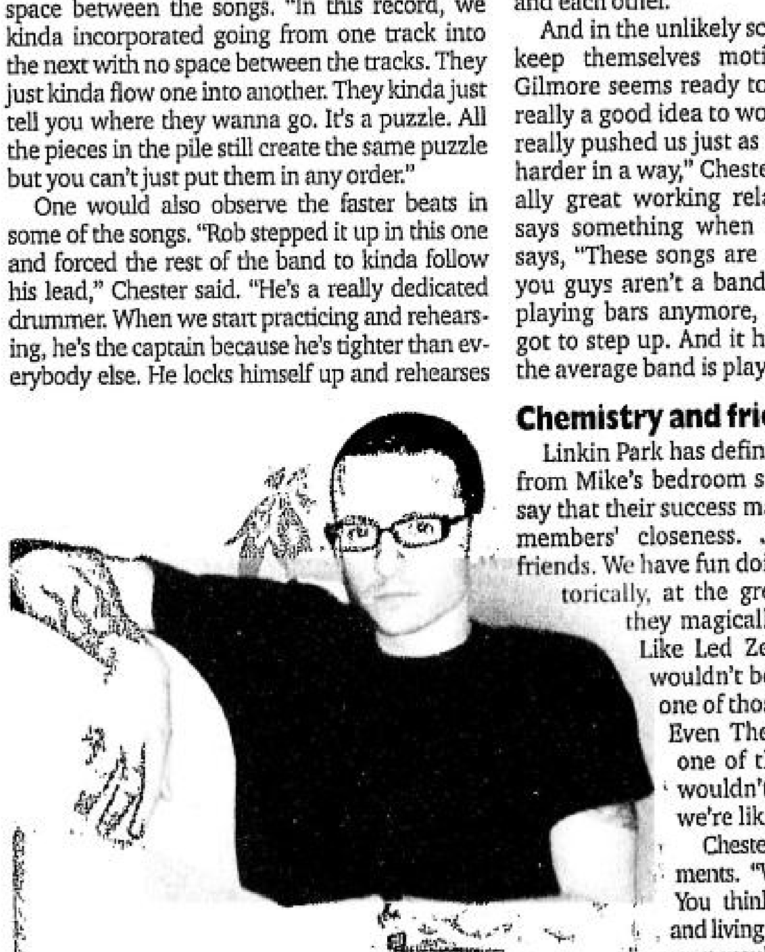
And in the unlikely scenario that they don't keep themselves motivated enough, Don Gilmore seems ready to lend a hand. "It was really a good idea to work with him again, he really pushed us just as hard and maybe even harder in a way," Chester said. "We have a really great working relationship. He always says something when we're recording," he says, "These songs are good for a band. But you guys aren't a band anymore. You're not playing bars anymore, this is like NBA. You got to step up. And it has to be beyond what the average band is playing."

Chemistry and friendship

Linkin Park has definitely come a long way from Mike's bedroom studio. And it's safe to say that their success may be attributed to the members' closeness. Joe said, "We're all friends. We have fun doing it. When I look historically, at the great bands that I like, they magically had that chemistry. Like Led Zeppelin, Led Zeppelin wouldn't be Led Zeppelin if even one of those guys were different. Even The Police, you know. If one of those guys changed, it wouldn't be the same. I think we're like that too."

Chester echoed the same sentiments. "We all really get along. You think that touring together and living together in a bus for two years would kind of make you sick of each other, but it really is a humbling experience 'cause you can't be selfish on the road. You have to really be part of the team. You can't think of yourself, you have to think of

LINKIN/ D3



CHESTER Bennington: "Our philosophy has always been what is best for the song."

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